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A profusion of steel

Tim Hilton

DIANE WALDMAN:

Anthony Caro
232pp. Phaidon. £50.
0 7148 2248 9

Anthony Caro is the most distinguished living British artist; and yet the nature of his distinction is of a type that makes him rather a controversial figure. By common consent, he is a master. The artistic justice of his innovation is unquestioned. The beauty and inventiveness of the huge oeuvre that has followed his realization of the possibilities of abstract sculpture are plain for all to see. But Caro is not an artist who is, as it were, shared by all who have an interest in such matters. His art proclaims a set of artistic principles that separate him sharply from those who wish to see art, or indeed to make it, as an expression of the more general values of society. There is an Olympian aestheticism about Caro's sculpture: his commentators need to rise to its example.

Diane Waldman's monograph is a decent introduction to the sculpture, but it does not seem that she has been inspired by it. The point of the book is her photographic survey, which takes us from Caro's early training in the Royal Academy schools after the war to the bronze reliefs that were exhibited in London and New York last year. Mrs Waldman illustrates around 300 works in all, and has selected (as far as I can judge) those which best represent the artist. Such a survey is greatly useful, for many of the sculptures have had a rather fugitive circulation in reproduction, on private view cards and the like. A complete photographic record of all Caro's sculpture (in four volumes, compiled by Dieter Blume and published last year by the Galerie Wenzel, Cologne) exists but Mrs Waldman's book is handier by far and for most purposes will be entirely serviceable.

Those purposes will not include the academic, for her bold approach has not the time for detail or nuance. Her text cannot be other than adventurous, for it attempts to explain and judge a body of work quite unlike any other in the history of sculpture. And she has risked the test of her sympathy with the artist by using a biographical format. To some, this kind of monograph may nowadays seem a little dull. But there is still

much to recommend it. The background and growth of understanding; the desire to be free, or to be bound to one's contemporaries; the realization of maturity; the sense of self and the sense of younger generations; above all the consonance of the art with the human personality of the man who fashioned it: who more than modern artists make us wonder about these matters, and what better method is there than the biographical to deal sensitively with them?

In Caro's case, biography seems the more justified because he has had a rather unlikely life for an artist: in the rhythm of it, in the attachments, but most of all in the choice of his medium. One can imagine a kind of painter coming from a stockbroker family, Charterhouse and Cambridge, but a revolutionary sculptor with that background is simply anomalous. More remarkable

than that, of course, is the way that Caro transformed his art at the age of forty, after many years of academic or relatively minor work. Mrs Waldman reproduces some of this early academicism alongside her description of the way that Caro began to feel the need for an art that would be more personal and direct. This period is obscure, and perhaps the impatience came gradually. But what we now recognize as the artist's typical abruptness, ambition and desire to seize things is revealed in the major step he took after his Royal Academy training. He knocked, unannounced, at Henry Moore's door and asked to work for him.

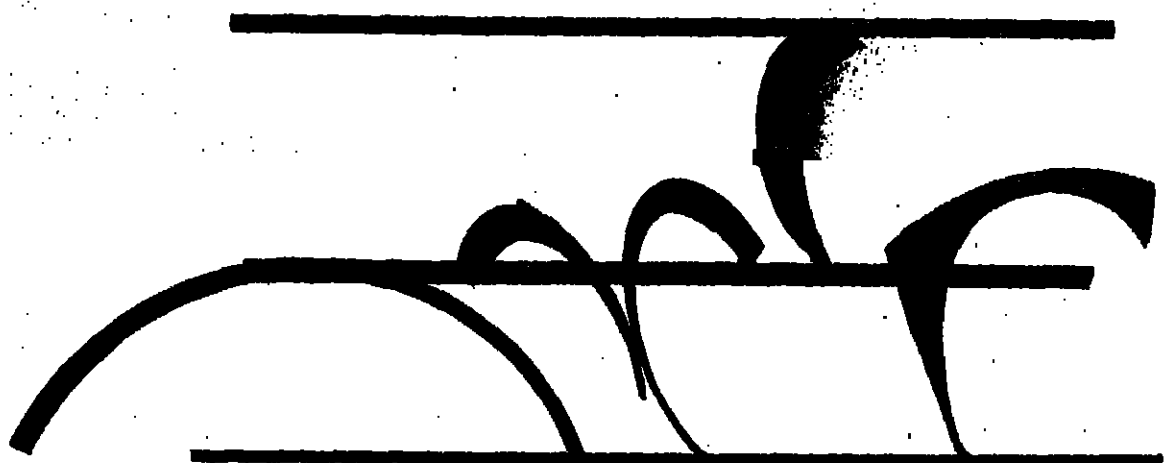
Caro was Moore's assistant for two full years between 1951 and 1953. It seems that it was not the older artist's work that was important to him. What mattered was his friendly conversation and his library. Caro

first learnt about modern and primitive art from Moore's books. Thus he gained inklings both of a remote authenticity and of sculpture's highly unequal attempts to be a contemporary medium. This was a gain; but in another matter I suppose that he was confused. Caro was still attending Royal Academy drawing classes while Moore showed him ways to draw volumetrically, as would be natural to such a sculptor. But while this "made sense" to Caro in one way, surely the chiaroscuro and lighting effects (let alone the fallen warriors and reclining plantesses) revealed the fictitiousness of the enterprise. In the depths of his artistic character Caro must have known it. After his own work suddenly matured, he never once made a drawing for a sculpture. More significantly, we might say that Caro's 1960s sculpture was the first, ever, whose entity

simply cannot be indicated, nor even hinted at, by being drawn.

Mrs Waldman could have made more of this. But her book is certainly informative about Caro's early years, and makes some convincing points. She is right to say that it was Caro's "classical" temperament (by which she does not mean an academic one) that divided him from artists like Butler, Paolozzi and Turnbull, whose surrealism or artified angst was the up-to-date look in the mid-1950s. She is persuasive about Caro's vigorously modelled nudes of that time. Nonetheless, her account of his early teaching is wrongly balanced, and her description of what the artist calls his "conversion" to radical abstraction is mechanical. These things may be more closely connected than we sometimes imagine.

Caro taught at St Martin's School of Art from 1953 onwards. He there led the revolution in modern sculpture that, so remarkably, was effected in a single department in one English art school. His influence at St Martin's, in popular belief, dates from 1960: to that time, that is, when he began constructing sculpture by welding. The nature of that influence is not absolutely germane to Mrs Waldman's book. But the matter of the teaching is crucial. I think it likely that the urgency of Caro's instruction reached a high point around 1959. It could be argued that the ferment of his teaching reflected his own difficulties: certainly the sculptors who then attended his classes believe that it was partly frustration that led him so to drive, goad - and inspire - his pupils. The studio exercises and projects of the time (which Mrs Waldman has not attempted to reconstruct) are very moving. They lead the imagination to consider drawing, colour, mass, gravity, fantasy, representation, materials - and do so in a way that is utterly plastic and physical. When they were devised, these exercises were miles away from Henry Moore. They were also far in advance of any contemporary art, including Caro's own. They seem to have set out to attack the sculptural tradition (static, rather, some might say) on all fronts: to see where it would break first. Yet they are also impersonal, in the sense that any student could have tried them, and made of them what was possible: it is as if Caro wielded



Anthony Caro's "Plece LXXX", 1969; (painted steel, 13½x53x20 inches). From a private collection.

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Spanish realities and quixotic illusions

Arthur Terry

STEPHEN GILMAN:
Galdós and the Art of the European
Novel: 1867-1887

413pp. Guildford: Princeton
University Press. £21.10.
0 691 06456 3

DIANE F. UREY:

Galdós and the Irony of Language
138pp. Cambridge University Press.
£17.50.
0 521 23756 4

Of all the great nineteenth-century European novelists, Galdós is the one who has made least headway among English-speaking readers. One obvious reason for this is the lack of good modern translations: of the half-dozen or so versions of his novels which have appeared in the past twenty years, only one, to my knowledge, is still in print, and the others would hardly justify their re-issue. Another - more difficult to pin down, but real none the less - is the scandalous lack of curiosity, even in academic circles, concerning all but the most recent literature of the Hispanic world. In view of this, can one even begin to hope that good translations might create a public appropriate to their merits? (Who now remembers the splendid versions of Ega de Queiroz and Machado de Assis published in the 1950s and 1960s - praised unanimously by reviewers past virtually unobtainable?) One small sign of hope, perhaps, is the interest shown in Galdós by a number of contemporary English novelists - among them V. S. Pritchett and C. P. Snow - who, on the basis of the translations available, have brought their own experience as practitioners to bear on a writer whom they rightly regard as one of the major representatives of the Realist tradition in fiction.

The *stege of Badajoz, 1811*. A drawing by Philippoteaux from Napoleon's *Jour de la bataille de Badajoz, 1811*. By Commandant Henry Lachouque, Jean Traule and J.-C. Carmignani (191pp. Arms and Armour Press. £16.50. 0 8536 506 1).

best part of twenty years to solve: the conflict between the desire to convey historical movement and the "compelling need to freeze it in order to comprehend it". In practice, this led to a double development: the simultaneous writing of the first two series of *Episodios Nacionales*, in which Galdós set out to re-create the crucial events in nineteenth-century Spanish history from Trafalgar to his own time, and the first of the "novels of contemporary life", in which he gradually moved from the provincial settings of *Dona Perfecta* (1876) and *Gloria* (1876-77) to the Madrid which was to prove his richest source of inspiration.

One of the great strengths of Gilman's book lies in its approach to the question of influences. Like other critics, he sees Galdós's development partly in terms of the shedding of didacticism and the consequent increase in subtlety of characterization, and rightly emphasizes his astonishing ability to learn from his own creative practice. Yet where many critics are content to refer in a general way to the "influence" of other novelists - Balzac, Dickens and Zola, to name only the most obvious - Gilman prefers to speak of a "creative dialogue" in which a particular novel may be seen to hold in balance a variety of others, to the extent that an individual scene or relationship may build imaginatively on a number of models in a genuine act of recreation. If, as he claims at one point, Galdós was "Spain's first great nineteenth-century reader", this is only another way of suggesting the subtle kind of interplay which goes on in any serious writer between his own practice and that of others, a process which inevitably escapes the cruder kind of source-hunting.

Thus, to take a particularly striking example, *Fortunata y Jacinta* may be read in one sense as a critical reassessment of Zola's vision of social destiny, not so much to suggest how people in real life are determined by their milieu, as to convey something of the detail from which they construct their ambitions and fantasies. As with Cervantes, the "reality" he hints at is multi-dimensional: if certain of his characters remind one of Don Quixote, it is because they are made to learn that truth, if it exists at all, is never a fixed quantity, but something which they themselves produce through a process of trial and error. For both Cervantes and Galdós, books - what people read, and how it affects their lives - are an important part of this process; the distortions of literature, which in turn may reflect false notions of history, are often at the root of our misreadings of life, and especially of our tendency to see things in terms of oversimplified patterns.

Galdós's own process of trial and error, as Gilman reconstructs it, involves a movement away from the didacticism and the deterministic psychology of the early novels, where the characters are often introduced to represent particular aspects of contemporary Spain, to a much subtler kind of fiction, in which the inner resources of certain individuals

that is to say, in a given society (Restoration Spain) and in a particular climate of novel-reading at several removes from the rest of Europe. As with Scott - one of his earliest influences - Galdós's starting-point is the kind of historical novel which, in Lukács's phrase, bears a "felt relationship to the present": in the case of *La Fontana de Oro*, the parallel between the short-lived Liberal régime of 1820-23 and the crisis which was shortly to lead to the abdication of Isabel II in 1868. What distinguishes Galdós from the beginning, in fact, is the sense of history common to all the great nineteenth-century novelists, though dangerously lacking, as he well knew, in most of his Spanish contemporaries. As Gilman clearly sees, the question for Galdós in this and the other early novels is "How did Spain get where it is now?" Yet, as he goes on to answer, the attempt to provide an answer in fictional terms created an aesthetic problem which it took the

one major novel may help to generate another: Ana Ozores, the heroine of *La Regenta*, is Alas's response to the quixotism of Emma Bovary, and it is Ana's peculiar combination of spiritual dignity and folly in human relationships which seems to have persuaded Galdós that Spain, far from being the morally bankrupt country of his earlier novels, could lay claim to a spirituality which, in Gilman's words, "was at once a priceless legacy and a potentially catastrophic form of irrationality". The consequences for his own later fiction were immense: like Dostoevsky - another inspired reader of *Don Quixote* - Galdós could at last see his way to creating a series of characters, from Maxi, Fortunata's husband, to the protagonists of *Nazarín* (1895) and *Misericordia* (1897), who, whether they are in madness or spiritual grandeur, all pursue a vision which sets them free from the banalities of contemporary society.

As in other aspects of Galdós's

and the efforts to translate these into actual living, become touchstones for the rest of society. In its general lines, Gilman's analysis of this process would be hard to fault, though one might question his placing of certain novels within the overall pattern. Thus *La Desheredada* (1881), though crucial both for its increase in social range and the growing mastery of language this entails, is less determined by Naturalist procedures than Gilman claims, and the continuity with the earlier novels - both in the nature of its "realism" and the persistence of a liberal, middle-class viewpoint - much greater than he seems prepared to concede. (Galdós makes it clear, for instance, that the responsibility for the downfall of the central character, Isidora Rufete, lies not so much in her milieu, as in her own failure to learn from her mistakes; his study of Isidora's delinquent brother Mariano, on the other hand, though clearly meant as an example of Naturalist determinism, remains at the level of a case-history, "not meant to be solved from above, and entirely lacking in the compassion for the lower classes so conspicuous in his later work.")

More seriously, Gilman's indulgence towards the faults of *La Desheredada* - "to insist critically on fissures, flaws and incongruities amounts to... gross underestimation", he writes at one point - is not extended to other, finer novels like *El Amigo Manso* (1882) and *Lo Prohibido* (1885), both of which he treats far too dismissively. A more sympathetic account of *Manso*, in fact, could only have strengthened Gilman's own case: not only is *Manso* himself the first of Galdós's characters to be seen wholly from the inside, and in this sense at least a crucial step towards *Fortunata y Jacinta*, the subversion of conventional realism which Gilman describes as artificial and lacking in social depth indicates both the renunciation of didacticism and a readiness to extend "realism" beyond the spiritual dimension so characteristic of the later fiction.

These reservations scarcely affect Gilman's analysis of *Fortunata y Jacinta*, which is deeply pondered and often very illuminating. As an account of what it is like to "live inside" a major novel over a period of many years, it could hardly be bettered. Whether he is talking about Galdós's fictional strategies or his creative re-working of other novels, Gilman writes with an inwardness which can only increase one's admiration for the achievement he is describing. Though he is inclined to present himself as one of a dying race of novel-addicts with a deep antipathy towards current critical jargon, this makes him all the more responsive to the kind of effects which Galdós himself - always a highly intelligent reader of other people's novels - must have intended. This means, above all, a responsiveness to language: not merely to the vexed question of Galdós's "style", but also to his gift for creating characters who are immersed in the medium of ordinary human speech, and whose moral victories come from their ability to use such debased currency as a vehicle for truth.

The supreme example of this is *Fortunata herself*, whose "oral integrity" is an index of her vitality and power to surprise, and at the same time an implied critique of the evasions and self-deceptions of the rest of society. Or as Gilman himself puts it: "What matters is her epic effort to understand and to create herself in terms of the debased language, decayed values and rationalizations that her society has to offer." In this, both language and silence (the language of company and the silent truth of solitude) play their part in the development of an individual consciousness whose unifying evaluation of experience enables it finally to transcend both history and milieu.

Like all Galdós's best fiction, *Fortunata y Jacinta* has the power

to enmesh the reader, not only in a vivid simulacrum of the world he knows, but also in the moral confusion from which human judgments tend to arise. Thus his language, even at its most apparently casual, is seldom as innocent as it seems, and more often than not contains what Gilman calls "a plurality of ironical messages". Diane F. Urey's book, though much shorter and more selective than Gilman's, investigates the nature and implications of such "messages" with great skill and sensitivity to nuance. Ironical messages, since they are by nature oblique, are often a test of the recipient; in Galdós, such strategies, as Urey explains in her introduction, "educate" the reader not to be too self-assured, not to believe everything he reads, and not to give too much credence to his own powers of objectivity." What follows is a series of examples, ranging from *La Desheredada* to *Misericordia*, each representing a particular kind of ironical context - portrait, setting, narrative - and ending with an analysis of the novella *Torquemada en la Hoguera* (1889), a self-contained instance of "ironical texture".

Urey's readings of these various texts are invariably shrewd; her use of structuralist concepts - for example, Barthes's notion of the "voice of reading" - is discreet and genuinely illuminating, and contributes a good deal to the economy and lucidity of her argument. This, roughly speaking, is that the language of fiction is in itself ironical since, however much it may disguise the fact, it can never provide an exact copy of external reality. Or, as she says herself in the course of a discussion of *La Inocencia* (1888-9): "Words create reality, or rather they supplant it by their superimposition upon a reality which can never be known, if it exists at all. Words call attention to themselves and mask, rather than illuminate, what they appear to describe."

In *La Inocencia* and its sequel, *Realidad* (1889), both characters and readers are faced with an infinite regression of possible meanings which ultimately points to the relative nature of truth itself. In other novels, the process is less explicit, though if anything more subtle. One factor here is Galdós's marvellously intuitive sense of the ambiguities of ordinary language and the way he can put it to use as a test of the reader's responses. One simple example of this is the double meaning of the word *conversión* ("conversion") at the end of *Torquemada y San Pedro* (1895), where one is left wondering which sense - the religious or the financial - is "correct". Another, which Urey analyses quite brilliantly, is the use of the verb *contar* ("to tell a story" and "to do sums") in *Torquemada en la Hoguera*, where, in her own words, it forms "the *logos* in which the language of the money-lender (ie. Torquemada himself) and that of the narrator come together".

Should all this make Galdós sound too self-consciously "modern"? Urey, like Gilman, is able to point to Galdós's supremely intelligent understanding of Cervantes: "Like Cervantes, Galdós shows us that the narrative is a continual flow of language within which we construct the conventions of characters, plot; theme, fiction and history... We should not be too certain of our own objectivity, because the text of the novel (and perhaps of the world) may be ultimately ironic; each meaning conceals another, and the one which appears most absolute may be as relative as the next." Like all the great nineteenth-century novelists, Galdós came to recognize that "realism" is never more truthful than when it questions its own power to tell the truth. His attempts to involve his readers in this recognition, as both these books admirably show, compelled him to move beyond any narrowly defined concept of "realism", though the experiments which led him to this point would be inconceivable without the various strains which meet in what, for want of a better term, we call the "Realist novel".

art itself to change, and not necessarily through his own agency.

The point is that Caro's "conversion" or "breakthrough" was well prepared for. And the implications and complications of that "breakthrough" are so extensive that we should stop thinking of it as something that happened overnight. Alas, this book adds nothing to what has already been written about the generation of Caro's originality. The material facts are well known and often repeated. In 1959 Caro visited America and talked to Clement Greenberg, Kenneth Noland and Helen Frankenthaler; he also met David Smith. After his return to England he began to make totally abstract sculpture from prefabricated steel, directly on the floor, without the core that was traditional to statuary and without an enclosing profile. This sculpture he painted. We are by now so used to the "effortless" Caro that we forget how difficult this transition must have been. If he had a revelation in America, it was one that in some ways slowed him down. We know of only three sculptures done in the year after his visit, and these are relatively simple ones (at least in terms of their fabrication). Mrs Waldman correctly identifies "Midday", the third of them, as the first masterpiece. It may have been made out of other sculptures that were destroyed. In any case, "Midday" confirmed Caro's direction and led to the more fluent and assured production of the next two years, before his return to America in the autumn of 1963. This we should regard as the first period of Caro's maturity.

How is the art historian to reconstruct and interpret what was going on? Mrs Waldman has evidently decided to rely only on published accounts of the "breakthrough", but not on all of them. Kenneth Noland's excited recollections of his

night-long talks with Caro might have found a place in her narrative. To take a larger view, she should have considered *Art and Culture*. For if Greenberg's conversations with Caro cannot be recovered, why ignore the massive evidence of his book? *Art and Culture* was being prepared for publication at the time of the two men's first friendship: the book reprinted and on occasion rewrote the essays Greenberg wished to preserve. The earliest of them was "Avant-Garde and Kitsch" of 1939, the most recent the long piece on collage, rewritten in 1959. They are two essays that take one from a powerful historical vision and definition of modernist culture to specific examples of the way that art is made to work. Is it not possible that Caro's emergent relationship to Picasso's collage was clarified by Greenberg's analysis? One or two other points about *Art and Culture* seem relevant. The elevation of its tone and ambitions for modern art had no equivalent in England (literary readers will observe, though, how pervasive is its dialogue and rivalry with T. S. Eliot). It was completely American, often anti-European, but at the same time "classical" in the way Mrs Waldman believes Caro's instincts to be classical. Most of all, there is throughout the book a desire for a kind of sculpture that, at the time of writing, was not quite in existence.

If Caro created such sculpture, it was certainly not done on demand. I feel that his art came to have deeper affinities with Greenberg's sensibility later on, perhaps after 1965. Of course, one cannot be precise about such matters, and not only because we are comparing works of art with a taste in art. For to consider Caro's sculpture is often to be reminded how stiff - obtuse - are our ways of ascribing the influence of one artist on another. The argument that there is a lineage that descends from

Picasso and Gonzalez to Caro via David Smith seems to be based on technical considerations - that all four were welding - as much as on visual likenesses. Furthermore, Caro's sculptures of the 1960s were also extremely unlike each other. One reason why they seemed so admirable was the lack of resemblance between one piece and the next: so various was this art that one hesitated to say that it belonged to a style. Mrs Waldman has reduced this variety to a matter of contrast. She merely sets "linear" pieces against "monolithic" ones, pointing out how "Hopscotch" and "Month of May" come between "Lock" and "Titan".

In fact, as she herself then goes on to argue, "Titan" belongs to another conception and is to be considered in a different context. After his Whitechapel exhibition in 1963, Caro left England for America. For two years he taught at Bennington and there made sculpture which, beginning with "Titan", was sparer and less additive than his English work. This may have accorded more with American taste, particularly that of Greenberg and Noland. But it may be that his sculpture changed because of his first real contact with David Smith. Or different kinds of technical assistance may have had something to do with it. These issues that no doubt be explored by other writers, who will need to consider the nature of profusion in Caro's art. Mrs Waldman believes that his production now significantly increased. This she attributes both to a general excitement in the American atmosphere and to Noland's recommendation that he work in series. However, her book is like all previous surveys in giving us only a handful of sculptures from these two years. What was going on in the pieces visible in the photograph of Caro at Bennington which is the frontispiece of William Rubin's 1975 monograph?

Do they constitute a series? And do they not arouse in us the suspicion that they were not the full flower of Caro's creation?

Diane Waldman is American (and Director of Exhibitions at the Guggenheim Museum) and it is possible that, like some other writers, she too easily believes that an American environment produced Caro's most decisive art. Another view would be that it was after the Bennington years that Caro came to his first very great period. This would begin with "Prairie", made in London after his return from America in 1965, and continue to "Orange" (1965) and some pieces in the following months, after which he stopped painting his sculpture and worked on heavier pieces in America. This was the time when Caro satisfied his need - his art's need - for profusion. But that was not done by working in series: it was done by the invention of table sculpture. This was also the period of his most delicate dialogue with David Smith, acknowledged and celebrated in many of the table sculptures (there are now more than five hundred of them) and in more massive sculptures too. Mrs Waldman does not feel that the purchase of material from the Smith estate, after the American sculptor's death in 1965, is worth much comment. Yet one does not ship a dozen tons of scrap metal from Bolton Landing to Camden Town as the result of a whim. These tank ends, boilers, forgings, wrenches, once intended for Smith's sculpture, now became literally a part of Caro's. A similarity or near identity of vocabulary was therefore predetermined. But the spirit of the English sculptor's work is not like Smith's, and this is one reason why the relevant art is so stirring. The American critic Michael Fried wrote in "Sun Feast" that it embodied Caro's "Blakeian imagination" and this exultant work, with others,

may be taken as a funerary celebration that is quite unique in the history of sculpture.

We have since known a dozen years of Caro's art. It has been too obviously divided into separate periods and is quite often marked by sets of works made and exhibited together which can reasonably be called series. The first of them was the group of sculptures with the word "Straight" in their titles shown in London in 1972. Another group, the "Plais", came about as the result of an invitation to Caro in 1974 to work at York Steel Construction in Toronto. There, cranes and teams of workmen enabled the artist to handle steel sheets weighing thousands of pounds and, as Mrs Waldman says, to use them with something of the same freedom and spontaneity that he was accustomed to on a smaller scale. Thirty-seven of these huge sculptures were made in a single summer. Mrs Waldman points out that they were accompanied by lighter pieces made in London, and comments on their relationship to the "Emma Lake" series made in north Saskatchewan in 1977. These are too linear, being made largely of thin steel tubing, that her comparison with Picasso's "drawing in space" sculptures was no doubt irresistible. Her book, alas, has not the space in touch on the many delicate differences that exist between Picasso and the Emma Lake series, in which may reside the life of the sculpture. Nor can she fully explain the resemblances she finds between table sculptures and Renaissance bronzes, or between Caro's recent bronzes and Donatello. Inevitably, perhaps, her text is more informative about the earlier than the later years of her subject. This said, one must still be grateful for the generous illustration of sculpture from the last five years: abundant beauty is a marvel of our time.

The objective of interpretation and the problem of fictional entities are only moments in Margolis's complex fabric. There is more on interpretation and on other questions about fiction besides the ontological one, but soon Margolis rushes on to other topics, dispensing an amalgam of insight and obscurity built to a running dialectic with other theories. (The range and breadth of his references are admirable. Unfortunately, many of them are mere hazy references interspersed in the argument, consisting of one line or two where he shows "a faint glimmer" where someone has gone astray. One learns to curse the inventor of the parenthesis.)

A book of such enormous scope might be a useful introduction to the philosophical aesthetic for the non-specialist. This one is insufficiently perspicacious for that, too turgid, too complicated, at once too sketchy and too detailed. Even the reader already familiar with the issues and the literature and the jargon will have considerable difficulty following the twists and turns of the argument and filling in the gaps, while keeping the whole in perspective. Nevertheless, there are insights here, possibly deep ones, awaiting the reader's patience and persevering enough to brave Margolis's tangled argumentation.

The recently published *Dictionary of Fine Arts* by Denis Thomas (201pp. Hamlyn, £5.95. 0 600 32995 X) is intended to offer, in the words of its introduction, "clear definitions of the terms and techniques" of the arts and "outlines the main schools, movements and forms of expression as they have developed in the Western world". ("There can be no actual interaction between fiction and reality.") Indeed, reference for him is not even a relation. (It is "grammatically represented in relational terms, but one cannot have an actual relationship with a fictional character.") What, then, could it possibly be? It is hard to escape the impression that the claim that fictions can be referred to is but a camouflage for the idea that there are such things, set alongside Margolis's recognition that there are not. Margolis's contention, like many others, seems a disguised attempt to have it both ways.

Rarely have philosophers been goaded into less seemingly contentious than by the problems of fiction. Two sets of theories persistently oppose one another: in one line we find an endorsement of the truism that Clarissa Dallo-way, being fictional, does not exist, never has, and never will; at the next moment we find ourselves allowing that of course there is such a character as Mrs Dallo-way. Is she a character, then, but not a person? There is a sense in which she is a person, one in which Grendel and hobbits and unicorns are not. Anyway, our question was about whether she exists, not what sort of thing she is. If Mrs Dallo-way is a character and character or not characters are persons. And how could she be either a person or a character, how could we even refer to her to ask which she is, unless she is something, unless she exists? But then, what of the truism that she does not exist?

One familiar contention is to distinguish between being and existence. Mrs Dallo-way does not exist, yet she is; there is such a thing (person? character?). Another line allows fictional existence, but existence in peculiar "realms" or "worlds" - "fictional worlds". Margolis, aschewes these contentions in favour of a third: fictions simply do not exist, and necessarily, he thinks; there are no such things. Nevertheless we do refer to them. The difficulty comes in explaining what it means to refer. Casual accounts of reference are currently favoured, and very plausible, but they are not available to

aspects of it that another interpretation may obscure. Fortunately a different explanation of its aversion to truth-values is at hand. The interpretation does not tell us what is in the work, but shows us. Only what is actually there can be shown, so perceptive interpretations cannot be false, and if they cannot be false there is no point in calling them true.

How close the analogy between critics and performers' interpretations remains to be shown. But one lesson to be learned is that even if attributions of truth and falsity are not appropriate to critical interpretations, we cannot conclude from this that the interpreter's task is not to discover what is in the work.

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But surely a performer's interpretation does illuminate the work, performed. It helps us to understand the structure of the work, reveals

aesthetic preception, performance, figurative uses of language; he delves into the interpretation, the viability of the distinction between moral and aesthetic evaluation, the bearing of artists' intentions on critical judgments, the problem of defining "art", analogies between art and language, and the relevance of speech-act theory to aesthetics, in the process pronouncing on the merits and defects of the work of scores of other recent theorists, including critics, literary theorists, psychologists, and philosophers of several different stripes - he does all this and more, almost without catching a breath. A frank survey of his inquiries would give something of the flavour of the book. Better to forgo the flavour and merely sample the inquiries.

The ontological status of works of art, whether they are particulars or universals, types or tokens, abstract or concrete, may not be of direct concern to practitioners of the arts, but the nature of critical interpretation is. Its "objectivity" has received a lot of knocks recently, and Margolis gives it some more. Critical interpretations are not, he thinks, accurate or inaccurate, true or false; the interpreter does not discover properties in the work but "imputes" them to it; interpretations tolerate "incompatible" alternatives. But he stops short of denying all "validity" to critical interpretation, allowing that interpretations may at least be "plausible" or "implausible". The stopping place is tenuous. How can something be even plausible if it cannot be true? What does "plausible" mean if not "plausibly true"? Margolis might opt to replace "plausible" and "implausible" with other terms of approval and disapproval, ones constructible as belonging to a different family from "true" and "false". "Reasonable", which he mentions, may be suitably non-committal; other possibilities are "satisfying" and "tasteful". But objectivity has a way of creeping back in anyway. So, if a Freudian reading of *Alice in Wonderland* is not true or false but merely "reasonable" or "tasteful" or "what ever", still it is presumably true of false that that reading is reasonable or tasteful, or whatever. If so, we can credit the interpreter with making a genuine claim about the work after

Descriptions and interpretations

Kendall Walton

JOSEPH MARGOLIS:

Art and Philosophy

350pp. Brighton: Harvester. £24.
0 85327 837 4

There are two ways for a philosopher to approach the arts. He may use them as a proving ground for theories of metaphysics, language, mind, value, etc.; as a place to apply his theories, to show what they do, and as a test of potentially destructive counter-examples. (What does an ontology based on Russell's "robust sense of reality" say to a fictional character?) Alternatively, a philosopher may see himself in the service of the arts, providing philosophical treatment for worries whose sources lie more within the arts than in philosophy. He may seek to clarify and refine the methods of criticism, for example, and in other ways offer advice, comfort, and sometimes discipline to artists, appreciators, critics, and historians of the arts. The first approach can seem sterile and pointless to those not already addicted to larger philosophical perplexities. The chief danger of the second is that through devotion to the arts one will ignore their links to more general philosophical concerns, with superficiality and philosophical halfheartedness. A merit of Joseph Margolis's book is that it does not fall neatly in either category. There are elements of both approaches in it, and an attempt is made to integrate them.

In fact, with a couple of notable exceptions, Margolis attempts to do nearly everything. He says little about the significance of the arts, their importance in our lives, and in society. But few other philosophically interesting aspects of the arts remain untouched. He begins with an account of the ontological status of works of art, arguing that none of them, not even paintings and sculptures, are "mere" physical or perceptual objects, but that they are "culturally emergent" though "physically embodied" entities. He examines the relations between description, interpretation, evaluation, and appreciation; he explores the nature of expression, representation, fiction,

مكتبة الأصل

Return of the repressed

W. M. Lamont

DAVID S. KATZ:
Philo-Semitism and the Readmission
of the Jews to England 1603-1655
286pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford
University Press. £17.50.
0 19 821885 0

This is a splendid first book on an important theme. In theory, all Jews had been expelled from England on July 18, 1290, by an act of Edward I in his Council. In practice, so the author tells us, something like thirty-five Jews and their families were living in England in 1660 as Spanish or Portuguese subjects, and were Roman Catholics in the eyes of the law. By the end of the seventeenth century formal toleration had been won for Jews, and England had its first Jewish knight, though full emancipation had to wait until the nineteenth century.

How did such a momentous change take place? David Katz's title provides the clue to his intentions. His enquiry ends with 1655. In that year, Oliver Cromwell opened the Whitehall Conference, when twenty-eight leading English divines, merchants and lawyers received a petition for the readmission of Jews into England from a Dutch Rabbi, Menasseh Ben Israel. It would have been difficult to imagine such a meeting taking place at any earlier time in English history. Dr Katz sets himself the task of investigating the curious combination of events which made such a gathering possible.

In this main task he is wholly successful. He has an enviable eye for anecdote. He relates with relish the strange history of the Traskites. John Trask founded a sect of the Christian Judaeizers who kept the Saturday Sabbath; he ended up in 1618 with a life sentence and the letter "C" burnt on his forehead. A Jew named Paul Jacob petitioned James I for an allowance on being converted to Christianity on the grounds that, as James was the only "True King of the Jews", Jacob was his child. He tried the same ploy on Charles II. Another Jew called Jacob opened the first English coffee-house in Oxford in 1650; four years later, he had been driven out of business by a fellow Jew who set up shop in the High Street. In 1646 Sir Thomas Browne devoted a whole chapter of

his *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* to the question whether Jews stank (conclusion: they didn't). Thomas Tany, a London goldsmith who circumcised himself in fulfilment of the Mosaic Law, perished in 1655 on a boat on the way to Jerusalem to summon the Jews.

Katz's delight in the bizarre does not get out of hand. On the contrary, what compels admiration is the skill with which anecdotal material is fed into a broad conceptual design. He seems to me to succeed in distinguishing various developments which led to Whitehall: the search for a universal language and the consequent interest in Hebrew studies; millenarianism, and the need to convert Jews before the Second Coming; the debate over the lost ten Tribes of Israel; the growth of religious toleration.

But there are problems in making the book revolve around Whitehall and 1655. Some of these problems Katz recognizes, and some he doesn't. First, the Conference failed. If Katz sticks to his brief, in a way this doesn't matter; he has only to show how it ever came to be held in the first place. But neither he nor his readers can be that austere; both have an interest in what came next. This leads him to a more controversial claim that after 1655 Jewish admission rested on a secure basis with the Conference recognition that "there is no Law that forbids the Jews return into England". This seems to me to overstate the case: despite William Prynne's strenuous efforts to argue otherwise, the 1290 exclusion had never had Parliamentary sanction; and this was not arcane knowledge.

The second problem is: what is the relevance of 1655 to the later story? Katz, at one point, retreats to the defence that, succeed or fail, the Conference performed a service in awakening the public mind to the very existence of contemporary Jewry. But the manner of awakening is as important as the fact. Were a Trask and a Tany equal to a Brightman and a Mede in shaping a response to the Jewish question? How helpful in the long run to the Jewish cause was the fact that the Whitehall Conference stimulated a widespread belief that Jews were buying up St Paul's Cathedral and turning it into a synagogue? How far was the association of the Menasseh mission with Cromwell a dangerous

political gamble? This is not wisdom by hindsight; it accounts for the opposition within the Amsterdam Jewish community to the mission. In some ways, the years between 1660 and 1664 were more decisive for the future of English Jewry than anything which preceded them.

This excellent book provokes one final, ironic thought. What would have been the fate of English Jews if the Conference had gone Cromwell's way? If Katz's book has a hero, it is John Dury. That tireless worker for religious unity was the man who introduced Menasseh to England - he was Cromwell's unofficial agent in the Netherlands, Switzerland and Germany. As early as 1646 he had been drawing up plans to convert the Jews, yet, confronted with Menasseh's petition in 1655, he became cautious; a salutary example to Katz

of how the committed "began to waver when faced with the prospect of living Jews rather than theological abstractions".

For once, I think that here Katz's historical imagination has not been equal to the task of responding to the seventeenth-century mind. Dury doesn't waver. Would that he did! He is unnervingly consistent. He always wanted Jews to become Christians. In 1655 he responded to Menasseh by insisting that Jews be compelled to listen to proselytizing sermons without debate and forbidden to discuss their religion with Christians. A year on from the Whitehall breakdown, he was proselytizing and viding charity for Jews in Jerusalem. The Bodleian librarian, another advocate of Jewish toleration, wanted Jews to wear distinguishing dress and not to leave home on

Good Friday. Roger Williams, great champion of religious toleration and of the Jews, referred to "Jews or Antichristians" (note the conjunction) in his most famous pamphlet as "the vilest idolaters".

The point to make about these high-minded Christians, who, in varying degrees of commitment, look up the Jewish question is not that they were inconsistent or insincere; they were not some variant of those nineteenth-century philanthropists whose dedication to good works receded on closer contact with living persons. The summoning of the Whitehall Conference is their triumph. If they had had their way, it would have been a notable victory for practical Christianity and religious toleration. But it would have been a victory from which English Jews might never have recovered.

Subsiding subversives

William Thomas

J. ANN HONE:
For the Cause of Truth: Radicalism in
London 1796-1821
412pp. Clarendon Press. £19.50.
19 821887 7

During the years of war against Revolutionary France and Napoleon, London set the pace and gave the tone to the English radical movement. Westminster and the City, and to a lesser degree Southwark, had a reputation for popular agitation and mob violence, and their MPs, apparently obedient to large popular constituencies, were often regarded by the *bien pensant* as dangerous demagogues and subversives. To sit for Westminster, in particular, was the aim of any radical who wanted the annual following, and those who made it, like Sir Francis Burrett or the buccannier sailor Lord Cochrane, were given a popularity by the print-sellers which rivalled that of men like Pitt and Fox.

How serious a threat they posed to the unreformed and aristocratic political system has always been hard to determine. Radical leaders were not necessarily democrats. Their political careers would have been impossible without great wealth, and the shop-

keepers and artisans who made up their followings had a strange weakness for patriarchy. Their own radical sympathies could fluctuate. After two decades of being a popular idol, Burrett could admit to a friend: "I begin to grow very aristocratic; there is no dealing in important matters but with gentlemen."

Their constituencies too grew steadily more moderate and respectable. In this respect the City led the way. In the 1790s the very safety of the government was held to be threatened by the activities of the London Corresponding Society, whose leaders were watched and their meetings proscribed by repressive legislation. Francis Place, whose papers are still our major source for the radical movements of the time, had many contacts with Revolutionary Jacobins. He was a friend of Thomas Hardy, whose acquittal in 1794 was a radical triumph. He admired Colonel Despard, who was hanged in 1802 for high treason. Twenty years later, he went to a dinner to commemorate Hardy's acquittal and there he counted twenty-four former delegates to the committee of the LCS. All, he noted, had flourishing businesses and some were very rich. Parallel with this rising prosperity, the tone of radical opinion changed. In the 1790s English Jacobins had expected to overthrow monarchy and priestcraft by a general assertion of the brotherhood of man. By the time peace came, radical opinion had become more insular, more moderate and more disillusioned. Revolutionary plotting gave way to constitutional lobbying, great schemes of human regeneration to plans for model prisons and Lancasterian schools. The revolutionaries of 1797-8 had many friends and not a few sympathizers in high places. The Cato Street Conspirators in 1800 had almost none. Soon after Cato Street, London radicals rallied to Queen Caroline, and former regicides and atheists found themselves demanding that she be given her full rights as Queen and that her name be restored to the liturgy.

Ann Hone's book covers these twenty-five years of change with a wealth of research, much of it quite novel. Some of her material is valuable in itself, whatever the argument it supports, but the points for which she argues appear to be three. First, she challenges the idea that the radical movement had a sharp check in the late 1790s, and that the cause of reform had to wait for a revival in 1809 or 1810. On the contrary, she says, there was considerable continuity of aims and personnel. The "Treasonable Practices and Seditious Meetings Acts of late 1795 did not snuff out the radical movement or drive it underground. Second, she believes that London radicalism cannot be understood if one looks only at one area, the City, Westminster, or "the Borough". There was a metropolitan radicalism which overlapped these boundaries. Finally, she says, we must present "what the radicals did and how they did it", to see them as men, and not as representatives of theories or groups.

The other two points are assumed rather than demonstrated. Administratively, Westminster and the City were quite separate, and their political tempers quite different. Within each, there were marked differences between parishes, as anyone who canvassed them soon discovered. A study of the whole metropolis should surely account for these differences. But they are hardly noticed here. There is no map, no general account of the framework of local government, not even an outline sketch of the major economic changes in a rapidly growing capital. Important secondary authorities like Francis Sheppard's *London 1800-70: The Infernal Wen* have apparently been ignored.

Without such a framework, the individual radicals do really appear as Hazlitt described them, "a collection of atoms whirled about in space by their own levity". Dr Hone avoids "the elusive question of motives", and she is not interested in ideological currents. She knows a vast amount about the hundreds of obscure individuals who made up the radical movements. Here and there, with a Richard Carlile or a Thomas Hardy, we have a lot of biographical information. But for most of these men we can know little more than their trades and addresses: their only significance for us is as evidence of larger trends. If those larger trends are not described, they are only lists of names generating vaporous rhetoric, and the reader is at a loss to know what groups were engaged in what activities and why.

This may be unfair to Dr Hone's argument, but the arrangement and style of the book do not help clarity. It. Solecisms like "Representation, coincident with taxation" do not do credit to the eminent academics who edit this series, and the frequent use of "protagonist" as if it meant the opposite of "antagonist" is a sad portent in a book from the publishers of *Modern English Usage*.

Diagnosis of a débâcle

Christopher Thorne

GORDON W. PRANGE:
At Dawn We Slept: The Untold Story
of Pearl Harbor
873pp. Michael Joseph. £14.95.
0 7181 2090 6

Gray and indistinct across the waves, the [destroyers] heralded the attack fleet thundering behind them. About three miles astern, *Abukuma*, *Hiei* and *Kirishima* crashed in column through the heavy swells. Flanking *Chikuma* and *Tone*... The flagship *Akagi* breasted the waves in grim majesty.... To port, *Soryu* and *Hiryu* plunged recklessly along. Last, rushed *Shokaku* and *Zukaku*.

Thus, awash with verbs, the Japanese task force bore down on Pearl Harbor, its commander, Vice-Admiral Nagumo, presiding over its fortunes with "big, diagnostic eyes" and "the strong yet sensitive face of a man who seems to have accepted the irreversibility of history".

Gordon Prange's book reads like the preparatory treatment of its subject for the cinema; and indeed his work was apparently used as the basis for the film *Tora! Tora! Tora!* The structure of the volume, which switches the reader's attention in swift succession from one actor (major or minor) in the drama to another, serves to heighten contrasts and sustain tension; but it is not the author of sustained or profound analysis. Heavy reliance is placed upon the subsequent testimony of those same actors, as given for example, during the various investigations into the Pearl Harbor disaster and the work conducted by the American authorities; but too seldom, it seems, does the writer bear in mind (as Paul Fussell, for one, has done in *My Great War And Modern Memory*) Hobbes's observation that "imagination and memory are but one thing, which for divers considerations hath divers names". Overall, specialists in the field will find in the book little of major significance that is new to them, and it is difficult to feel that the nature of the work as published is commensurate with the thirty-seven years that Prange devoted to its preparation.

That having been said, *At Dawn We Slept* does, nevertheless, provide the student and the general reader alike with both interesting material and sensible judgments. Prange demonstrates in detail, for example, the persistent failure of the commander of the US Army units on Hawaii, Lieutenant-General Walter C. Short, to appreciate the overriding importance of providing a defence for the Pacific Fleet when it was in harbour, together with the consequences of his obsession with the danger of sabotage by local Japanese agents. Likewise, the evidence Prange produces underlines the failure of the Commander-in-Chief of that Pacific Fleet, Admiral Husband E. Kimmel, to perceive that Pearl Harbor would be more, and not less, attractive a target for the Japanese when his ships were there, on the spot.

Noting the numerous occasions when planners and the designers of war-games on the American side had, in fact, foreseen the possibility of a Japanese surprise attack on Oahu, Prange contrasts effectively the underlying approaches of the two sets of armed-forces in the period leading up to December, 1941.

In theory the American plans could scarcely have been improved. They were clear-cut, far-sighted, and revealed a solid understanding of the tactics which the Japanese would conduct on December 7th. But... they lacked only a genuine belief, can it be said, in the possibility of a Japanese attack, the defenders of Oahu expressed in writing their acceptance of the possibility of a Japanese attack, they considered it improbable. In contrast, the Japanese planners appeared fantastic, almost suicidal. Yet

the task force carried it out because [Admiral Yamamoto and numerous other officers of lower rank] breathed life into it by their dynamic faith.

Pearl Harbor was not to be the last occasion during the Far Eastern War when such a contrast in attitudes contributed to Allied disasters, and Prange rightly notes the racist element in the insouciant confidence at the time - as it was to be found among American officers at the time - that the British in Singapore, through the web of complications surrounding the war-time and post-war inquiries conducted by the American services and Congress into the Pearl Harbor débâcle: the need to protect the secret of the "Magic" breaking of Japanese codes, for example; the perceived need to sustain General Marshall in his position as Chief of Staff of the US Army; and, after victory had been attained, the avidity of some Republicans in Congress to wreak havoc upon the record of the late Franklin Roosevelt and all his works.

It is here, of course, over the possibility that in 1941 the President knew of the Japanese intention to attack Pearl Harbor and failed to take action in order to bring a united America into the war, that interest tends to be concentrated to this day. Were it not for the perennial attraction of conspiracy theories of any kind, this would be surprising. After all, not only did Roosevelt's Republican enemies fail to uncover any convincing evidence that pointed to such a conclusion, but in 1962 Robert Wohlstetter, in her admirable study, *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision*, seemed to demonstrate exactly how it came about that the numerous clues that did exist regarding Japanese intentions were not pieced together and acted upon. Yet various writers have recently been attempting to substantiate with new pieces of evidence the old and discredited charge about Roosevelt and his colleagues. Indeed, as demonstrated by the facile headline of a superficial article in *The Times*: "Why F. D. R.

kept quiet about Pearl Harbor", the assertions being made by John Toland and others are likely to obtain ready acceptance among that species of readership which finds in contemporary history a source of instant frissons.

To explore this particular issue in a satisfactory manner would require a separate and lengthy article. Here, an all-too-brief summary must suffice. It is true that one can state with confidence a number of conclusions that might be thought to point in an "anti-Roosevelt" direction (to put it crudely). Those who were in the White House were practically certain that Japan was about to strike. Among them, men like Henry Stimson (Secretary of War) and Roosevelt himself welcomed the likelihood that by thus delivering the first blow the Japanese would enable a unanimous US to be brought into the existing, Anglo-German war, as well as put a stop to Japanese expansion in the Far East. Moreover, the approach that Washington had adopted to the final series of negotia-

tions with the Japanese since the summer of 1941 had itself helped ensure that Tokyo would opt for war rather than for further delay or a *modus vivendi* on American terms. Yet the acceptance of these propositions does not invalidate the conclusion that it was the Japanese approach to the Far Eastern crisis of 1937-41 that was the central element which brought about a wider war on December 7, 1941. Nor does it entail an acceptance of the thesis that Roosevelt and his closest colleagues knew and passively accepted that it was against the Pacific Fleet in Pearl Harbor that the Japanese blow would fall. Prange himself concluded after devoting those thirty-seven years to the subject that neither the evidence nor common sense sustained such an allegation. On the basis of my own work in the field, and recent flurries to the contrary notwithstanding, that also remains my own view: at the very least, the charge against Roosevelt is "not proven". But then, of course, one may lack sufficiently diagnostic eyes.

A miniature massacre

P. J. Parish

PHILIP SHAW PALUDAN:
Victims: A True Story of the
American Civil War

160pp. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press. \$11.95.
0 87049 316 7

For anyone who cherishes the popular image of America as the home of the biggest and the greatest, massacres present something of a problem, or an exception to the rule. Perhaps it was the Boston "massacre" of 1770, in which no more than five people lost their lives, which established an uncharacteristic American tradition of miniaturization in this field. The incident which is the subject of Philip Shaw Paludan's book - the killing of thirteen prisoners by a small force of Confederate soldiers in a remote Appalachian valley in January 1863 - clearly belongs to this same tradition. It is surely an error of judgment (if not something worse) for the author to attempt, in his preface, to link this minor episode in the Shelton Laurel valley of North Carolina to the horrors of My Lai and even the Holocaust of the concentration camps.

Professor Paludan seems to be on somewhat safer ground when he seeks to justify a book about this one small incident as a study of the relationship between great events and the history of a small community, and the daily experiences of ordinary life. However, even here he has to confess one substantial practical deficiency in the patchiness and inadequacy of the evidence which survives. This is not a book born out of the discovery of some new treasure-trove of source material. Paludan sets out to use some of the tools of psychology, sociology and anthropology to reinforce the conventional historical approach. When he declares his intention of "seeking to understand the dynamics of the atrocity-producing situation" one has uncomfortable premonitions about both his methods and his style, and the book itself is not altogether reassuring about either.

The "massacre" occurred when, in response to a raid on the small town of Marshall, in western North Carolina, the Confederate commander in the area, Henry Heth, sent a detachment of troops under the command of two local men, Lawrence M. Allen and James A. Keith, to hunt for the Unionists and Confederate deserters who had made up the raiding party. In the context of the irregular guerrilla warfare of the Appalachian mountain region, Heth's orders which discouraged the taking of prisoners could easily be interpreted as an unrestricted licence to kill. After a sweep through the Shelton Laurel valley, thirteen prisoners, ranging in age from thirteen to sixty, the majority of whom had

not been involved in the raid on Marshall, were shot, on Keith's orders. Despite the evidence gathered in various investigations, no one was ever punished for this atrocity.

Paludan's method of constructing a book on this one small incident is to describe at some length the environment and the people of the valley, the personalities and backgrounds of Heth, Allen and Keith, the character of the bitter partisan warfare in the mountains themselves. Indeed, the background comes close to overwhelming the foreground, and reader whose attention may wander even momentarily after almost one hundred pages could well miss the description of the massacre itself on pages 97-98. (The absence of any map is another obstacle to a clear understanding of what actually happened.)

For all his strenuous efforts, Palu-

dan does not, and probably could not, succeed, through his blend of local colour and psychological speculation, either in elucidating the incident completely or using it as the vehicle for some broader statement about the circumstances and pressures which lead to atrocities great and small. The incident probably warranted an article rather than a book, and there is a good deal of extraneous material in some of the chapters.

Paludan's attempt to read more into the episode than is really to be found there derives, at least in part, from a rather narrow view of the nature of civil war. The Shelton Laurel "massacre" was exceptional only in so far as the American Civil War was an exceptional civil war. For most Americans, it was not a brothers' war, nor even a neighbours' war. It was a war between regions, not within communities. Adherence to one side or the other was dictated in most cases by one's

The well-connected

Esmond Wright

Philip H. Burch:

Elites in American History: The Federalist Years to the Civil War
355pp. New York: Holmes and Meier. \$38.50.
0 8419 0594 0

Philip Burch's study is the first volume of three, designed to show the socio-economic background and affiliations of America's top officials in the federal government. Almost half the book consists of tables setting out the economic ties of the governing élites of each administration, and there are ample supporting pages of notes and sources. The study was begun in the 1960s, and arose from an exploration into the links between business and government as shown in the boards of directors of America's largest corporations. What was this relationship like in the past? How was it, asks Dr Burch, in the first eighty years of the Republic?

The subject is so big and wide-ranging that it is hardly a criticism of the book to describe it as disappointing. But disappointing it is. In part, this is because Burch relies almost exclusively on secondary sources, since, as he says, somewhat puzzlingly, "the papers and correspondence of high federal officials cannot readily be checked." His survey of the names of those in power between 1789 and 1861 is so summary that it cannot say anything very fresh about them. Indeed, it forms little more than a "Who's Who" of American administrations for these years, ex-

cluding, however, all Senators and Congressmen. The book starts - it seems - with a thesis that government ought to be "of the people, by the people and for the people", but then reveals with a sense of surprise that this was not the case in the eighty years in question, when wealthy agrarian and mercantile interests "dominated" the government, to be followed in the Jackson and post-Jackson years by new élites of newly-formed state banking and railway enterprises.

Considerably more surprising, is Burch's own surprise at his discovery: it is now seventy years since Charles Beard concluded, that the Founding Fathers were "men of wealth and station. Who else would or could form and guide the new state? It was a world of and for white men only; at least one-quarter of the population was illiterate; elections were open, noisy and venal affairs, and their tone was one of alcoholic deference. Those called to govern were men of long-tailed families and vast acres - in Britain as in America - because only they had any substance in land or property, to put it at risk. They were, most of them, interlinked, and formed a vast country. Surely this is now familiar and over-told ground? It is nearly fifty years since Thomas P. Abernethy of the University of Virginia, whose name Burch consistently misspells, said of Jackson, that he never really championed the cause of the people, "he only invited them to champion his".

To a degree understated here, these men of substance often came from lowly origins. Burch recognizes of course that Washington was born

place on the map. There were of course exceptions - on the western frontier, in the border states and in the Appalachian mountain areas - where the war was a local conflict of guerrillas and partisans, in which atrocities of the Shelton Laurel kind were much more likely to occur. Pro-Union feeling was strong in parts of eastern Tennessee and western North Carolina, a region where the grip of the forces of law and order was shaky at the best of times. Here, clashes between Unionist and Confederate partisans were not always easy to distinguish from the lawless activities of bushwhackers and deserters. The all too common currency of internal strife and resistance movements in other historical situations emerges, in the context of the American Civil War, as the particular, and perhaps exceptional, atrocity of Shelton Laurel. The danger in focusing upon this one episode lies in exaggerating, not its horror (which was real enough), but its wider significance.

poor and came up by emulation of the Fairfaxes, by the death of his half-brother Lawrence, by a marriage into wealth, and by skilful husbanding of resources. But this could be said of many others: James Madison and James Monroe were hardly of the same order as King Carter or the Fairfaxes; Edmund Pendleton rose up the ladder by natural ability as a lawyer; the Cabots and Browns of New England rose by smuggling. There were many ladders up which to climb. Elites they maybe were; but in an open society, and America was, in the words of William Allen of Pennsylvania, "the best poor man's country in the World." The administrations were "dominated by upper-class figures", but many had not been born to the purple, and it was this fact that made America unique both in 1787 and afterwards.

Such criticism is perhaps a little unfair to the author's intention, and it may be that his second and third volumes on the more modern periods will have fresher evidence to offer than is assembled in Volume One. Burch's first chapter provides a useful survey of the secondary literature, and at intervals there are shrewd and valuable summaries of the major interpretations of each President. A student wanting a *véde mecum* to guide him through the politics of the first eighty years of the United States will find in this book a useful map to a familiar landscape.

POSTAGE: ENGLAND 150p AMERICA 17p
SECOND-CLASS POSTAGE PAID
NEW YORK NY PERMIT NO. 600
AIR FREIGHT 1200 YEARLY. TIMES NEWS
AND STREET, NEW YORK, NY 101

The uncommon reader

Hermione Lee

GEORGE JEFFERSON:
Edward Garnett: A Life in Literature
350pp. Cape. £12.50.
0 224 01488 9

If we think of the English literary scene in the early part of this century – say from 1894 to 1937 – we think of the labels (Edwardianism, Modernism, Imagism), of the great names (Conrad, Lawrence, Yeats . . .), and of the network of literary relationships (the "clerisy" of families like the Strachey and the Stephens, the intense, productive friendships, like Lawrence's with Middleton Murry and Katherine Mansfield, or Conrad's with Ford). We think of certain crucial cultural movements (the impact of American "naturalism", or of the Russian novel), and of the radical changes in publishing conditions (the end of Mudie's demand for three-volume novels, the upsurge in little magazines, the new opportunities for young writers, the founding of major houses: Hutchinson, Fisher Unwin, Heinemann, Duckworth, Edward Arnold, Methuen, Cape). Any one of these writers or movements or changes in publishing conditions would be a footnote in every major biography and book about the period, and who now, in George Jefferson's work, gets what he deserves: a scrupulous, detailed, thorough and conscientious account of his "life in literature" which gives an illuminating idea not just of his personal achievement, but of the era in which a publisher's reader could gain as much authority as Garnett did.

Garnett came of a large, interesting middle-class literary family. His father, a likeable eccentric Victorian scholar of Yorkshire ancestry (who deserves his own biography) was Keeper of Printed Books at the British Museum; his mother was an Anglo-Irish hostess and raconteuse, Edward, who "took pride in a combined inheritance of Yorkshire obstinacy and Irish rebelliousness", grew up on Primrose Hill, three doors away from the Madox Browns, in an atmosphere of "liberal values, intellectual commitment and altruistic attitudes". By the time he was an extremely tall twenty-year-old he was living in the East End with a brilliant older woman and trying to write novels. He belonged to the Rhymers Club, and he and Constance were "famous and passionate supporters of Russian anarchism and socialism". In the mid-1890s he had become a reader for Unwin's at 10s a week, and the famous house in Kent, The Ceanne, was being built along William Morris' medieval lines. However much a figure of the literary establishment Garnett became, that earnest 1890s liberal was never lost sight of: all his life, Garnett opposed censorship and jingoism, refused academic or state honours, smoked herbal cigarettes, and encouraged young writers.

His seriousness and idealism, what Ford called his "inverted Puritanism", his commitment to "creative" criticism, his impatience with reactionary pundits like Andrew Lang and with the general public's philistinism, made him an alarming as well as a valuable employee. New opportunities for expansion and experiment there may have been, but publishers fought shy of the shocking and the obscure. Garnett was dismissed by the "chilly and repellent" Unwin in 1899, and worked for Heinemann, Gerald Duckworth and Rodley Head before, in 1921, becoming reader for Jonathan Cape for "a salary of £300 a year, the publication of all his books and a case of burgundy for Christmas". He stayed with all his employers, and with Missinham, the editor of his reviews for the *Nation*, who found him "rather militant as an anti-Puritan". Cape could be irritated too by Garnett's independence and forcefulness, as this splendidly bad-tempered and inaccurate remark suggests: "Garnett, has just discovered another bloody genius – Miss Bates."

But Garnett was himself a "bloody genius" at his job. It is difficult to think of another figure in "that twi-

light world that lies between literature as a creative art and literature as an article of commerce" who was so perceptive, so inspired, so tenacious and so influential. The tributes to him were manifold. "Your criticism is exactly the sort I want most" (May Sinclair). "I work with your notes beside me" (Cunninghame Graham). "In making it suddenly clear to me you have done me a service for which I can scarcely thank you enough" (Wells). "What a Trojan of energy and conscientiousness you are" (Lawrence). "If Edward Garnett were here he would tell me in half an hour what I should do and the way would be clear" (Liam O'Flaherty). "You are Cape's soul" (Sean O'Faolain). "The greatest book surgeon of his day" (Henry Green). "Your criticisms were an immeasurable help to me" (J. C. Powys). "A queer old bird, but as disinterested as any literary man I have met" (Middleton Murry). Many books were dedicated to this "literary uncle", among them Conrad's *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* and Galsworthy's *The Man of Property*.

Garnett's genius as a reader took several forms. He had a nose, not just for great novelists such as Conrad or Lawrence at their first appearance, or for major writers like Galsworthy and Maugham whose early work was not yet assured, or for first-rate English poets such as Edward Thomas and W. H. Davies, but for names which a less perceptive reader might have let slip as too difficult, too local, too foreign, or

too odd: May Sinclair, Dorothy Richardson, W. H. Hudson, C. M. Doughty, Richard Jefferies, Roy Campbell, Olive Schreiner, Henry Williamson, J. C. Powys, Henry Green. He championed fine books which had been neglected such as "Mark Rutherford's" *Revolution in Tanner's Lane*. He saw exactly how one book would appeal – in E. Nesbit's *Treasure Seekers* "the conception of the children of the household trying to aid the Father in impetuous straits is great, the sort of thing to please the British mind" – or how another should be marketed: "Much depends on the advertising," he wrote of an early Maugham. The new series he started at Unwin's and Duckworth's – the "Pseudonym Library" for which Yeats wrote his autobiographical novel *John Sherman*, the "Greenback series" which contained W. H. Hudson's *El Ombu*, or the "Popular Library of Art" for which he got Ford to write on Holbein and Rossetti – show his cleverness.

He was a disinterested and acute reviewer (especially of Conrad). He was not parochial. With his help, Cape's list became transatlantic as well as distinguished; Sarah Orne Jewett and Stephen Crane were two of Garnett's discoveries. His prefaces to the Russians were a crucial factor in "the roars of ecstatic discovery" with which English readers greeted Turgenev and Dostoevsky in the 1910s and 1920s. (I wish there was

more about Constance Garnett, whose toughness and clarity of mind come through strongly.) He defended his authors against censorship and against greedy publishers, and supported them in times of stress, as Liam O'Flaherty's letters, thanking him for everything from moral support to a new bicycle and new teeth, touchingly illustrate.

Above all, he was a ruthless, patient, and minute critic of his authors' manuscripts. The most gripping parts of George Jefferson's book are the letters from writers accepting Garnett's corrections. Lawrence calls him his "good angel" and lets Garnett do all the "pruning" of *Sons and Lovers*; Galsworthy meekly agrees that Bosinney should not kill himself in *The Man of Property*; and Conrad, paying Garnett the greatest compliment of his life, tells him that Garnett makes him understand and judge what he has himself produced "unconsciously". Too few of Garnett's own letters to these writers are reproduced, though we do see him telling Conrad to "CUT!" yet again ("Omit 'fathomless serenity', taking Ford to task for being 'German, ambitious, slovenly, vague', making Galsworthy change a 'subjective' characterization to an 'objective' one, and tacking off H. E. Bates for "the bad Batesian facile manner"). I wanted to know more about how it felt to have the responsibility of such writers' trust and dependence.

But Garnett's literary standards, if

not his emotions, are made clear. "Think how Conrad and Crane would have made this situation sharp and tense", he writes to Bates. This veneration for intensity and formal control reveals an interesting paradox. To begin with, Garnett was ahead of his time: now, he seems very much of it. His protégés left him behind; he came to have his blank spots. Some of these are political – he calls Kipling "the genius of all we detest" – but most are aesthetic. Garnett and Lawrence famously part company when Garnett's inability to understand *The Rainbow* provoked the letter rejecting "the old stable ego of the character"; a less well-documented parting of the ways occurred when Sean O'Faolain refused to go on being "the Balzac of Ireland": "You see each generation finds its own idea of what is true and real". Garnett had no time for writers he thought of as "popular" such as Firbank; more notoriously, he could not stomach or understand Joyce and Beckett. Some satirical accounts of Garnett in later life, looking like a great clumsy bear or an "enormous frog", confirm Lawrence's attack on him as "a tiresome old pontiff". But Jefferson gives a fair, measured portrait of a figure whom William Plomer (who took over from Garnett at Cape) described in 1969 as appearing, "when the commercial organization of publishing has so vastly developed . . . almost prehistoric". It is the biography of, in V. S. Pritchett's words, "a man with a vocation".

The ball stops rolling

Alan Bell

ANTHONY POWELL:
The Strangers All are Gone: Volume 4 of To Keep the Ball Rolling
224pp. Heinemann. £9.50.
0 434 59941 7

Throughout his autobiographical sequence, *To Keep the Ball Rolling*, Anthony Powell has courteously taken his readers into his confidence. Now, in this fourth and final volume, he muses on how best to cover the years after the emphatic break of the Second World War. Discarding the chronological approach, he chooses an album method, for, as he remarks, "in the course of my own reading, I have often found the trivial to be more acceptable, even more instructive in fact, than some attempts at being profound". Odds and ends are therefore promised. They come in good measure and with an engaging randomness. Previous volumes, apparently as loose as this one in texture, were in fact more firmly under control. *The Strangers All are Gone* emerges as a thing of shreds and patches held together only by an occasional wry anecdote or decisive character judgment.

After the business of wartime, incidents are of necessity fewer. The literary editorship of *Punch* was less of a battleground than Powell's liaison work with the Polish forces, despite the tensions generated at the paper by the clash between the traditional jollities of the A. P. Herbert tradition and the new, more bracing editorialship of Malcolm Muggeridge. Bouyerie Street is seen as a "lonely, valetant ward" revived by a salutary injection of Muggs, whose virtues as an editor are stressed, not least the extraordinary number of bees likely to be buzzing under the editorial bonnet.

The *Punch* period is recalled mainly through its characters, and characters in fact form the staple of the album. Few are as fully realized as that of, say, Dru/Penstone in a previous volume, with the exception of the portrait of Molander-Ross/Trapnel. To many *Dance* sportsmen it will be the Trapnel-esque features of this sympathetic "fifteen-year-old" sketch that stand out, with the ball's waiting the arrival of the unsuccessful literary man as he calls to pick up some saleable review copies at the *Punch* offices. The women, the cane, the

unfinished novels are all there, but as with many other equations revealed in the autobiography, it is even more interesting to see how the novelist has gently transformed fact for the purposes of fiction. Reflections on the craft are ultimately more rewarding than clues to who's who in the *Dance* Casanova, for example, (mentioned at the end of a chapter on the *Lady Chatterley* trial) is commended for having "the instincts of a novelist in presenting a series of autobiographical episodes in such a manner that substance is imparted to the other characters concerned".

Powell encountered many of the personalities in this final volume only late in their lives – as was the case with Ivy Compton-Burnett and Siegfried Sassoon; others he approaches mainly from a literary angle, with the book review taking over from the reminiscence. Sir Rupert Hart-Davis's

Lyttelton Letters and *The Arms of Time*, for example, are dealt with in some detail, but Powell's relationship with Sir Rupert is treated more distantly. As Powell says, "By the time his biography of Hugh Walpole came out in 1952 I seem to have known Hart-Davis scarcely less than I do now; now perhaps scarcely more than then" – a gnomic admission made necessary by Sir Rupert's own recent autobiographical revelations. Portraits of other friends, such as Kingsley Amis, or of brief encounters crisply recalled (Sholokhov "had the bearing of a morose taxi-driver dissatisfied with his tip") are the more satisfying for avoiding a reviewer's approach.

Sholokhov (described to Powell by Sir Isaiah Berlin as "a grim literary luncheon at the Russian Embassy as 'a bad-tempered Muggidge') was encountered at a period, just after

the war, when writers' conferences were beginning to offer renewed opportunities for travel. Powell's later journeys occupy several chapters, taking in both "informal lectures at Ivy League colleges" (as a visa clerk described one American tour) and literary gatherings in Venice and Sofia with less to recommend them. The Société Européenne de Culture at least provided some settings for *Temporary Kings*, and the Bulgarian gathering was attended under the wing of that adroit and experienced confederate C. P. Snow.

At home, Powell settled into a fine Georgian house near Frome (described in loving topographical detail), with congenial neighbours and a succession of literary-cats (Albert, Flitney, Fum, Trelawney, etc.). Luck seems to have happened beyond the production at regular intervals of the series of twelve novels, together with two plays (one never produced) that are discussed in much greater detail than the *Dance* itself. The row with the paperback publishers over the change from Osbert Lancaster's covers, and some of the commercial arrangements for the American editions, provide a little information about the progress of the *Dance*, but one could have wished for more.

The ball has been kept rolling for four volumes. How, then, best to stop it? Musings provoked by the antics of the Durga Temple monkeys at Benares, and by Webster on a Spaniard's fart, give place to animal versions on lengthening shadows, on muffled figures loitering in wait, on the eighth decade. Gloom is dispelled by thoughts of the benighted call for last orders, appropriate to so many characters in the *Dance* – and many characters in the autobiography sequence. Unlike the *Dance*, however, real time is slightest opportunity for sentimentalities (as Moreland, as Barnaby, as Dicky Unfraville used to say, "his creator does not find say, but (fart), some compound nouns, and many idioms have gone down the drain"). Including the idiom "the space thus saved" has been filled with new material – in particular, words from subjects "huddled for the O-level and GCSE examinations". So *Avon* and *Eccles* are out, and *Australopithecus* and *schindleria* are in. Furthermore, *ragae* and *steel band* have joined *polka* and *waltz*, and *Bhagavadgita* has joined *Bible*. As for "I am able to judge, OSD seems to cover science pretty well,

A Photograph: Tehran, 1920s

How false, incongruous, each prop
That crowds into your photograph –
The stiff, fake flowers, the painted drop
To signal opulence (park-gates
Your shoulder half obliterates)
The draped and tasseled table-top

Against which you benignly lean,
A slight smile ghosts your bearded face
As you confront the strange machine
Which traps you in your mullah's robe
(A signal says that half the globe
Can snigger at and call obscene).

Your gaze holds mine: I know that you
Were never rich, deprived, or mad;
That at your death a rumour grew
Of unemphatic sanctity;
That your frail legend troubles me;
That all the signals are untrue.

Dick Davis

Articles of association

Anthony Quinton

Roget's Thesaurus of English Words
and Phrases
New Edition prepared by Susan M. Lloyd
1247pp. Longman. £7.95.
0 582 35635 X

"Excitation. . . N. excitation of feeling; mental – excitement, suscitation, stimulation, piquancy, provocation, inspiration, calling forth. . . . These and other words from section 824 of the old Roget, placed between six lines by Hartley Coleridge and four by William Shakespeare, both on the theme of amorous slavery, serve to introduce the second part, 'Phoning', of Patrick Hamilton's *Hangover Square*, most evocative of Thirties novels, a fictional counterpart of 'Two Sleepy People' sung by Bob Hope and Shirley Ross.

Hamilton's device is a rare, and so memorable, literary allusion to the tried and familiar companion of everyone who attempts literary composition at any level above the most lukewarm, half-hearted, listless, unambitious, uninspired, plagiatic. There are other Rogetian moments in our literary heritage. The most notable of them must be wholly inadvertent although the great word-lister's influence is chronologically possible. Hopkins was only eight when Roget first came out.

How to keep – is there any, is there none, some, nowhere known some, bow or brooch or braid or brace, lace, latch or catch or key to keep Back beauty, keep it, beauty, beauty, beauty . . . from vanishing away! Some passages in Gilbert Ryle's *Concept of Mind* arouse thoughts of the Thesaurus as much as the song of the maidens at St Winifred's Well, as reported by Hopkins. Embarking on the topic of the emotions he writes, "By feelings I refer to the sorts of things which people often describe as thrills, twinges, pangs, throbs, wrenches, itches, prickings, chills, glows, loads, qualms, hankers, curdlings, sinkings, tensions, growings and shocks." In most writers there is not even this measure of indirect acknowledgement of a debt to Roget.

The publication of a new edition is a suitable occasion for all who to any degree live by pen or typewriter to spend a few moments in grateful meditation about the man who assembled in such a magnificently convenient way the tools of the writing trade (or utensils, gadgets, doodads, thimblegums, whistings, etc. is the whole bag of tricks, of tool, 630). He was a progressive worthy of

an indestructibly active sort, born in 1779 into London's French Protestant community and living for ninety busy years. Graduating from Edinburgh with a degree of MD at the age of nineteen, he practised in Manchester for a while, then in London, where he settled. He also lectured on scientific topics, wrote a Bridgewater treatise for £1,000 to infer divine workmanship from the structure of animals and plants, invented the slide rule and, succeeding Herschel in the job, was secretary of the Royal Society for over twenty years until eased out at the age of seventy.

Just the sort of man, one imagines a subjectless biographer saying to himself, for a nice long life. The thing has been done and, it appears, another biography is now under construction. Yet for all his vigour and multifariousness he is not a "shadowy figure" by the accident of general ignorance, as Susan Lloyd suggests in her excellent six-page preface to the new edition. The real interest of the man is what he did, not what he was. He was far too busy to need more than something the length of one of Keynes's essays in biography.

There are some points worthy of a moment's attention. His mother, who brought him up with the help, material and moral, of her brother Sir Samuel Romilly, friend of Bentham and confinder of capital punishment to serious offences, admired Rousseau. Roget spent a little time working with Bentham on a project for a "Frigidarium". (The word does not appear in the second edition – the earliest I have been able to get hold of – but *refrigeratory*, *ice-house*, *freezing-mixture* and *cooler* do.)

Susan Lloyd says "The unconventional-ness of the Bentham household soon led him to leave", although he always retained his respect for the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Roget felt a temptation to which Bentham was intensely susceptible. In his original introduction he writes, "I have frequently felt the want of substantive terms corresponding to abstract qualities or ideas denoted by certain adjectives, and have been often tempted to invent words that might express these abstractions." But he succumbed only four times: in the cases of *irreflexion*, *amorphism*, *shinistrally* and *gaseity*. These have not exactly caught on, unlike so many of Bentham's liberal coinages, of which *international* has turned out, perhaps, to be the biggest winner.

The Thesaurus, although taking its rise in a well-hating habit acquired in 1805, was really a work of Roget's old age, set about seriously in 1849

on his retirement from the secretariat of the Royal Society, its first edition published three years later and attaining its twenty-eighth edition by the time of his death. His son took over the job until his own death in 1908 and his grandson carried on until 1952. At this point Longman, the work's publisher from the beginning, felt free to let the work of revision and augmentation rip. The result was Robert Dutch's much enlarged edition of 1962. Now twenty years later another major revision has taken place.

The publication of this new version was attended with a small spirit or ebullition of journalistic silliness about an alleged feminization of the contents. Susan Lloyd deals with the matter in two mild sentences of her preface. "In listing nouns denoting people, we have borne in mind the fact that according to recent research the particle 'man', in such words as 'mankind', is not always taken, as formerly, to include men and women. Care has therefore been taken to include female terms as well, or general terms such as 'chairperson', where these exist." That could be a cover for all sorts of excess further on; but in fact it is not. Of the 140-odd entries in 270 *Mariner*, for example, many are exclusively male expressions but, apart from the trivially ambiguous "bosun's mate", only one that is exclusively female, namely "yachtswomen".

I imagine that many people with the Roget habit were brought up, as I was, on the version of the Thesaurus put out by Everyman's Library in 1912 and with revisions in 1925 and 1930. That is a kind of halfway mark between the first edition of 1852 and the latest version. I have superficially compared its contents to those of the second edition of 1853 and the two are really very close, despite the disquieting statement in the 1925 preface that "All obsolete words (some amusing curiosities excepted) have been removed". In four randomly selected sections the difference in size in three cases is negligible, in the fourth case the size of the section increases by a fifth.

Between Everyman and Dutch's edition of 1962 is where the really big enlargement takes place. There are, in fact, more pages of words in Dutch than in Lloyd's 1962 but I think Lloyd gets more on a page. By comparison, the second edition and Everyman, both with much less on a page than the two more recent versions, consist of 260 and 372 pages of words respectively.

Susan Lloyd has clearly set herself with determination to the task of keeping up with change in the language. There is a frightening passage in her preface where a hefty catalogue of neologisms takes off into continuous prose and she writes of the neighbours [who] include a *mole*, a *lookalike* and a *talking head*. One is a *cowboy* who *rips off* his customers with *downmarket double glazing*. Another is a *groovy* *trendy* who has *good vibes* – when he is *psyched up*. In a *squat* nearby live a *disident*, a *single parent* family, a couple of *gays* and a *captain of industry* given a *golden handshake* by a *multinational*.

As I am sure she would agree, some of this italicized material is already going down the tubes. Can a discriminating speaker use "groovy" or "vibes" nowadays without the inverted commas of dissociation? Soon they must join *transcolate* and *disembogue*; *particeps criminis* and *fidus Achates*; *rhino*, *blunt*, *dust*, *mopius*, *tin* and *ducalis* in the limbo of obsolescence.

From the first, Roget's book was a Thesaurus of English words and phrases. These, not to put too fine a point on it, have largely been clichés and are a crucial part of Roget's very particular charm, little oases of absurdity to linger at as one seeks to find some adequate words for a condolence letter or some accurate ones for a testimonial. Under 383 in the second edition we find: "Cold as a stone-marble, a frog, charity, Christmas, cool as a cucumber, – as a custard." From this rather temperate level we move to "salt as Lot's wife", "prendre le mors aux dents", "to send to the right about", "dine with Duke Humphrey", "the gentlemen of the long-robe". All but Christmas are still there under Cold. Lot's wife and Duke Humphrey have not yet been retired from Roget,

although surely they are hardly current.

There is a parallel fidelity to words which, having put in long and devoted service, now seldom emerge in unaffected discourse. A work whose first item in a long list of verbs of knowledge enumerates *savvy*, *ken*, *vot*, *vot of* and *ween* has earned the right to let itself go a bit on *down-market double-glazing*.

The accumulation of many editorial hands over a hundred and thirty years, a resolve to pursue the greatest possible comprehensiveness and, no doubt, the recruitment of computers in the role of helots, minions or *dues damnées* has not only contributed to the great increase in the book's size, it has also somewhat blurred the conceptual integrity of the sections. But Roget is not a dinner party where one talks to one's immediate neighbours; it is a large drinks party where one does not have any idea who one is going to end up with. About to spread his varied riches before the public Roget said in his introduction that the array of things available would not be misused: "an instinctive tact will rarely fail to lead [people] to the proper choice". Some might think that no longer true. But perhaps it never wholly was. Anyone tempted to get heated about the treatment of *disinterested* for *uninterested* might reflect on a note of Roget's of 1852 in which he excuses himself from concern with the former meanings of words. Indifferent, he rightly observes, "originally meant *impartial*". It may be that we are so uninterested in fair-mindedness that any word introduced to refer to it soon finds itself put to other work.

In keeping abreast of change, then, the new Roget has by no means cut loose from the past. In this new version its familiar utility is enlarged and its accidental delights are still plentifully available.

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October 28.95

DENT

33 Welbeck Street, London W1

Terms for teenagers

Robert Ilson

The Oxford Senior Dictionary
Compiled by Joyce M. Hawkins
760pp. Oxford University Press.
£3.75.
0 19 910222 8

How should one convert a successful smallish dictionary for adults into a dictionary "specially prepared for students in the upper forms of secondary schools"? To convert *The Oxford Senior Dictionary* (OSD), things were first taken to a useful appendix, slurs (not only *slur*, but *nancy*), smut (not only *smut*, but *fart*), some compound nouns, and many idioms have gone down the drain. Including the idiom "the space thus saved" has been filled with new material – in particular, words from subjects "huddled for the O-level and GCSE examinations". So *Avon* and *Eccles* are out, and *Australopithecus* and *schindleria* are in. Furthermore, *ragae* and *steel band* have joined *polka* and *waltz*, and *Bhagavadgita* has joined *Bible*. As for "I am able to judge, OSD seems to cover science pretty well,

though patchily: *ethnology* and *quasar* are in, *ethology* and *quark* are not. But when it comes to a discipline more familiar to me, language study, I begin to wonder: *transitive* is in, but not *transformation* in its linguistic sense; *linguistics* itself is in, but not *psycho-linguistics* or *socio-linguistics*. *Psycho-* and *socio-* are not entered as combining forms either, nor are such other useful building-blocks of the technical vocabulary as *astro-*, *bio-*, *physio-*, *itis*, or *-osis*.

Moreover, OSD's commitment to the scientific revolution does not become an overall up-to-dateness. *Fundamentalism*, *holistic*, and *lifestyle* aren't in at all, *alien* is not allowed to mean "extra-terrestrial", and you can't be *into* hang-gliding or wind-surfing (though both sports are entered).

Nor does OSD cater particularly for the student who wants to read the literature of the past, and so needs old words as well as new ones. Though *lol* and *welkin* are in, *betoken* is not, let alone *e'en*, *e'er*, *e'er*, or *prithie*. And for OSD, *thou* ("old use") simply means "you".

Nevertheless, OSD has a number of solid virtues, including hints on usage, etymology and pronunciation that are interesting and useful, albeit (not entered) very selective for ex-

Gloriously ordinary

Paul Bailey

EUDORA WELTY:

Losing Battles
436pp. Virago Press. £8.95.
0 86068 288 9

The belated publication in Britain of this exceptionally beautiful novel, which first came out in the United States in 1970, is both welcome and timely, coming as it does so soon after the appearance here of its author's *Collected Stories*. These two books alone are evidence enough that Eudora Welty is a writer of considerable distinction.

"What I do in writing of any character is to try to enter into the mind, heart, and skin of a human being who is 'not myself', is how she accounts for her method of working. "Whether this happens to be a man or a woman, old or young, with skin black or white, the primary challenge lies in making the jump itself." That "jump" is achieved with a seeming lack of effort in *Losing Battles* as the various members of Granny Vaughn's copious family gather to celebrate the nimble old lady's nineteenth birthday. No sooner have they arrived at the farm in Banner, Mississippi, than they start talking, and in a manner that is immediately compelling. The majority of Granny's descendants and their spouses are natural raconteurs, in the best tradition of the Old South, and the great originality of *Losing Battles* derives from its being composed of the tales told by these people as they while away a long, hot Sunday in early August sometime in the 1930s – the work of fiction thus produced is at once a novel and a collection of short stories.

The dialogue invented by Eudora Welty in this kind and delicate book is often cunningly arbitrary. Conversational *cult-de-sac* are explored and then deserted. The Beechams and the Renfros repeat themselves constantly, but each repetition brings with it a variation or two, almost imperceptible. Such talk – varied, spontaneous, recognizably absurd – is a pleasure to read because it is always revealing of character. It is funny, too, but not in a wanton or gratuitous way. In the following example a cyclone is being discussed:

"I picked the Methodist Church up all in one piece and carried it through the air and set it down right next to the Baptist Church! Thank the Lord nobody was worshipping in either one," said Aunt Beck.

"I never heard of such a thing," said Mrs Moody.

"Now you have. And those Methodists had to tear their own church down stick by stick so they could carry it back and put it together again on the side of the road where it belonged," said Miss Beulah. "A good many Baptists helped 'em."

"I'll tell you something as contrary as people are. Cyclones," said Mr Renfro.

"It's a wonder we all wasn't carried off, killed with the horses and cows, and skinned alive like the chickens," said Uncle Curtis. "Just got up and found each other, glad we was all still in the land of the living."

At the heart of *Losing Battles* is the story, recounted by sundry characters, of Miss Julia Mortimer, the dedicated school teacher who has fought a losing battle against ignorance and illiteracy. Julia never

actually appears in the narrative because she dies shortly before the family reunion for Granny, but hers is perhaps the most vivid presence in the entire novel. Welty displays remarkable skill as she resurrects this difficult woman through the voices of Julia's former students, only one of whom – Judge Moody – remembers her without resentment. Yet the more Granny's kin abuse the dead teacher, the more respect and admiration the reader feels for the object of their scorn. This is the triumph of an art that determinedly refuses to cast its own judgment, that registers – with an honourable disinterest – the judgments of the human beings it celebrates. Condemnation, it suggests, is practised by men and women, but not by novelists.

For Eudora Welty's art is, essentially, in accord with the complicated business of living. Like her beloved Chekhov, she achieves the big scenes they are subjects for discussion; they happen off-stage. Even when her characters' tongues are venomous, her concerned detachment is informing the reader that there is more to the speakers than their temporary state of viciousness would indicate. The principal events of *Losing Battles* are of a trivial kind that is rare in the literature that has come out of the American South – there is no rape, and only a hint of possible, distant incest. The prevailing tone is one of glorious ordinariness, but one that never sinks into the terminally cute – *pace Our Town*, and the jottings of Brautigan, Saroyan and Vonnegut. The humanity that is everywhere demonstrated in *Losing Battles* does not cuddle itself, does not invite approbation. It simply and necessarily informs what is probably the quietest masterpiece to be written in America since the death of Willa Cather.

perceptions drew chiefly on the classics of European fiction? When she produced her third work, a huge novel of life in nineteenth century Australia, it can hardly have seemed a promising subject to those who sought almost exclusively for fineness of perception and verbal ingenuity. And they would have been right: her language does have limitations, and she reads far better in the page and chapter than in the sentence or even paragraph – hence the difficulty of quoting from her novels. What she did achieve, as her advocates have always pointed out, was an intelligent, moving and truthful novel in the tradition of the great nineteenth century Russian and English realists.

The *Fortunes of Richard Mahony* has now been reissued in the three volumes in which it was originally published. It is misleading, however, to think of it as a trilogy. It is one novel whose parts cannot stand by themselves: the beginning of *Australia Felix* differs in almost all possible ways from the end of *Ultima Thule*, but it is Richardson's purpose to show how one man moves from the wide-ranging social world of the first pages to the private tragic depths of the last, and in order to understand this fully none of the stages must be missed.

Richardson writes of her hero with a scrupulous but passionate attention. Richard Mahony is an Anglo-Irish gentleman who has qualified as a doctor in Edinburgh, and then, enticed by "the rose-water romance of the English press," has made his way to Australia to seek his fortune on the gold-fields. At the beginning of the novel we see him, some two years later, meeting and deciding to marry another English immigrant, a sixteen-year-old girl whom he loves devotedly, but whose temperament and beliefs differ profoundly from his own. The novel is largely the story of a solitary individual and of a marriage. For Mahony is a fastidious, ultra-sensitive man who prefers intellectual study to the easy-going sociability of his neighbours, who cannot share his wife's enthusiasm for Australia and the opportunities it offers, and whose craving for movement and fear of being spiritually

stifled come to dominate an outwardly successful life – even as the months and years of living are cast into invisible threads of obligation around him.

The novel is built up of hundreds of episodes and scenes which illuminate each other, sometimes by obvious juxtaposition, more often by their oblique commentary on Mahony's career and on his constant reassessments of where and who he is. Near the beginning of the novel, for example, Mahony is sued for non-payment of goods, and, convinced that he is in the right, hires a solicitor to defend him. The plaintiff turns out to be a pathetic drunkard with a good case – but by this time Mahony finds that he is conniving at a legal defence based on bluff and the kind of cleverness that intimidates the opposition. His relations with Ocock, the solicitor, are difficult because he is torn between wanting to believe (and have others believe) that he has picked "a good man" and his contempt for Ocock and his professional in such a man, and Mahony cannot decide whether he is making a fool of himself in so despising his methods. And yet again, he cannot help the destitute plaintiff without depriving his loyal and loving wife. The episode does not lead to anything very dramatic; the difficult human truth at its centre is unfolded, examined and allowed to linger in the slowly accumulating past of Mahony's life. But much later, and under appallingly different circumstances, the episode is explored once again, and this time its reverberations echo back and forth throughout the novel.

The *Fortunes of Richard Mahony* is very different from Richardson's first novel, the obscure *Maurice Guest*; and from her second, the critical study of adolescence called *The Getting of Wisdom*. What is common to them is an imaginative understanding of very different sorts of people, and a belief that the truth can never be simple but must be told. Such qualities will not necessarily make a work fashionable, but they are important in judging its status as literature.

More than twice as long as its predecessor, *A Model Childhood* is also more complex, more explicit and bleaker in tone. The genesis of the novel is part of its subject matter: the writer sits at her typewriter in November 1972 and reports her uncertainties about a starting point. Compelled by her "research" visit with her husband, brother and teenage daughter to "L. now Polish G." in the summer of 1971, she embarks on a reconstruction of the past. It is the town in which she spent her childhood and which she last saw in 1945, when she and her family fled from the advancing Russian armies. Throughout the novel she struggles to answer the insistent question: "How did we become what we are today?"

The attempt at an answer involves her in "a game in and with the second person and the third person, for the purpose of their fusion." It is a difficult and desperate game, in which the narrator refers to herself as "you" and to the child she once was as "Nelly," using a technique which substitutes for linear narrative an intricate web woven from strands of the present in which she is writing, the recent past of the visit to her home town and the remoter past of Nelly's childhood in Nazi Germany. The strands are inseparable. The adult's reactions to the last throes of the war in Vietnam and the carnage in Chile blend with the child's experience of burning synagogues and ruined cities, to show a woman torn and haunted by recurrent cruelty, inhumanity and danger.

Thomas Mann is one of many writers alluded to in both novels, though his influence is most clearly discernible in *A Model Childhood*. The mention of Mann and the Magician in a conversation between the narrator and her daughter points subtly but unmistakably to the brilliant depiction of Nelly's confirmation party, where the photographer

See no evil

Margaret McHaffie

CHRISTA WOLF:

The Quest for Christa T.
185pp. Virago Modern Classics.
£2.95.
0 86068 221 8

A Model Childhood
407pp. Virago Press. £8.95.
0 86068 253 6

The Quest for Christa T. (re-issued to coincide with the publication of Christa Wolf's more recent novel, *A Model Childhood*) anticipates many of the themes and preoccupations of the later work: the fallibility of memory and the compulsion to remember, the tension between fiction and fact, the struggle for a form commensurate with experience, writing as a means of self-definition and of understanding others. The first-person narrator traces Christa T's life from their first meeting in 1944 to her death in 1961, touching on her various roles as schoolgirl, friend, refugee, student, writer, teacher, married woman and mother. The narrator bridges the gaps in her memory by speculation and conjecture, by insights gained from the sometimes enigmatic papers left by the dead woman, by conversations, real and imagined, with others who have known her: "one cannot, unfortunately, cling to the facts, which are too mixed up with chance and don't tell us much... one has to invent, for the truth's sake." Christa T's experiences suggest with admirable economy the large-scale horrors of Nazi Germany and, in the post-war world, initial euphoria and progressive disillusionment with the Communist slogans which superseded the Nazi ones. Yet for all its sombre aspects, and despite Christa T's early death, the novel is ultimately an affirmation of individual resilience in the face of evil and adversity. Christa T's moments of happiness, the solace which she finds in literature and in writing her poems, her craving to "see" and the affection she inspires, all indicate that her wish "simply to be a human being" is capable of at least a limited fulfilment.

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Andrack re-enacts the role of Mann's sinister Cipolla. Like Mann, Christa Wolf uses the performance of the magician/hypnotist as a metaphor for the way in which Fascism enslaves the minds of its willing victims, and breaks the resistance of the less willing. But there is one chilling difference. The deluded Mario, when roused from his delusion, shoots the man who has lulled him into mistaking ugliness for beauty. Nelly's cousin Astrid, after performing nihilistic and distasteful, trains what she believes to be a rifle not at her manipulator, but at the heart of her disapproving Uncle Walter. Thomas Mann wrote *Mario and the Magician* in 1929 as a warning to his fellow countrymen of the corrupting effects of Fascism already evident in Italy, and ends his story with the downfall of the dictator figure. Christa Wolf, writing between 1972 and 1975, ends her account of Andrack's performance with an example of how his destructive power can be stronger than the ties of natural affection, and there is no hint of his coming to grief. It is an ominous change of emphasis which suggests that delusion can persist and recur, and also that it cannot be dramatically ended with the death of a dictator.

This is a disquieting novel, not least in its revelation of how easy it was to hoodwink many ordinary people about the nature of the Nazi regime. The narrator depicts the insidious advance of Nazism among the innocents of the 1930s, the naïveté with which often decent people succumbed to the appeal of romanticized brutality, the lure of banners, songs and emotional rallies. Nelly's father, the grocer Bruno Jordan, who joins the Nazi party in 1933, has at first no real idea of what he has involved himself in. This is evident in his assumption that he can continue his amiable habit of extending credit to the wives of known Communists until he is intimidated and blackmailed by the odious Standartenführer Arndt. The narrator is not sure how far this experience of fear and small-scale corruption opened Bruno Jordan's eyes to the ugliness of Nazism; she cannot answer with any certainty the question how much Nelly's parents knew or half-knew. She cannot understand how they could not know, though she understands very well the pressures of fear which kept them publicly silent. Nelly is only three years old when the narrator introduces her and so the young to comprehend adult preoccupations. As she grows older, she displays few qualms at what is happening (she first hears the term "concentration camp" when she is seven and has no very clear idea what it means). Whatever uneasiness she may feel at her parents' half-understood comments on the contents of the local newspaper is offset by the influence of an adored teacher and the school in which she is taught about racial purity and the Jewish menace. It is not until her teens, when she experiences the presence of the Russian victors after the flight westwards, that she begins to question what she has been taught and to feel the stirrings of the guilt which still haunts the narrator.

A Model Childhood is remarkable for the honesty and courage with which it carries on the truth about the struggle to arrive at the truth about the past. The tentativeness of the novel's beginning is matched by the inconclusiveness of its end: "His memory done its duty? Or has it proven – by the act of misleading – that it's impossible to escape the mortal sin of our time: the desire not to come to grips with oneself?"

Christa Wolf has been well served by the translators of both novels, but it is a pity that the chapter headings of the German original have been omitted from *A Model Childhood*.

Franz Kafka: An Anthology of Masterpieces, edited and translated by Kenneth Hughes (200pp. University Press of New England. Distributed by Corgi Ltd, Ely House, 31 Ely Road, London W1. £14. 0 8745 206 9), contains nineteen essays among them contributions from Hannah Arendt, Eduard Goldschmidt and Helmut Richter.

The citizen composer

Gerald Abraham

CHRISTOPHER NORRIS (Editor):

Shostakovich: The Man and his Music
185pp. Lawrence and Wishart. £12.50.
0 85315 502 X

ERIC ROSEBERRY:

Shostakovich: His Life and Times
191pp. Tunbridge Wells: Midas Books. £8.50.
0 85936 144 6

"For the artist to become a legend in his lifetime" is at best an ambiguous blessing, and at worst a painful test of creative endurance," says Christopher Norris in his introduction to *Shostakovich: The Man and his Music*.

Shostakovich was thrust into public prominence from the outset of his career, achieving the kind of representative status, as Soviet citizen-composer, which made his every word and utterance a topic of intense debate.

A little exaggerated, perhaps, but Shostakovich early on found himself in a situation which a strong character would have found unenviable, and which must have been almost intolerable for a nervous, myopic person – and no composer in history had been so subject to violent and arbitrary changes of artistic policy dictated by a despotic government. It is a high tribute to Shostakovich that he managed to produce masterpieces amid the near-rubbish, besides gaining exculpation from the charge that he lacked the power of self-criticism. His public situation meant that his works and personality have provided rich fields for outside criticism, informed and uninformed. Both figure in this book.

"It begins with its best-informed chapter, fascinating pieces on the first eleven string quartets by Christopher Rowland and on the last four by Alan George, leader and viola respectively of the Fitzwilliam String Quartet which introduced the last quartets in this country and had the privilege of being coached by the composer. He was both kind and touchingly modest, and we have here a small-scale equivalent of what Weinberger might have written in his *Kaisertone für Auführungen klassischer Symphonien* if he had been able to talk to Beethoven, Schubert and Schumann. George ends:

In relating our experience of studying, learning, and performing these works, together with ideas and feelings gained from acquaintance with other music relevant to this topic... we have attempted to show how a feasible concept of what the composer desired to communicate can be proposed to receptive ears and hearts. It says much for the quality of these compositions that many of the points discussed can equally apply to the music of other composers.

From description of music from the inside we are brought down to description from the outside. Robert Dearing's chapter on "The First Twelve Symphonies: portrait of the artist as citizen-composer" (the last three are covered in a later chapter) is largely programme-noteary enlivened by passages like the one describing the "exaggerated posturing" in the Third Symphony: "Such batch-like attitudes are doomed, and their collapse is vividly portrayed in a remarkably pictorial passage of writhing brass over a dense bed of percussion..." And Dearing gets things wrong. The Second Symphony is not an early example of "Socialist realism". Gorky's phrase was not adopted until five years later; the work is a hybrid with a strong element of *Proletkult* in the choral canon. But he is more right than he knows when he speculates that the huge first *Largo* of the Sixth Symphony is a survival from a planned symphonic tribute to Lenin. Shostakovich had first contemplated a choral symphony in memory of Lenin as early as 1924 and in the late 1930s he had accumulated a great deal of

musical material for the first two movements, only to be blocked by inability to introduce Mayakovsky's Lenin poems. However, according to A. Sokhor, the Lenin material was used in the first movement of the Sixth Symphony and the first-movement exposition of the Seventh.

The chapter on Shostakovich's piano music – surprisingly small in quantity and mediocre in quality considering his distinction as a pianist – is contributed by another pianist-composer, Ronald Stevenson, whose own *Pastascaglia on DSCB* is described by a fellow-contributor as "one of the few masterpieces for the piano of this century". Stevenson plays the piano better than he writes, for his contribution is badly organized. He devotes six pages to Shostakovich's personality and appearance ("His complexion had a pallor and the plaster mask of the secular saint cracked in the grin of a gargoyles" and to Anton Rubinstein and other Russian virtuosi before getting down to his subject – and then he rushes off into digressions on the now forgotten Leo Ornstein and Henry Cowell. An attempt to place Shostakovich's compositions in the context of Soviet piano music in general would have been more helpful.

The editor's namesake Geoffrey Norris has supplied a chapter on the operas which is one of the best in the book, despite the limited area of his subject. Shostakovich completed only two out of the considerable number he contemplated, the early *The Nose*, derived from Gogol, and the original and revised versions of *The Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*. (Why did the editor not think of a chapter on the ballets?) Norris is a scholar and gives his references properly. Moreover he and Malcolm MacDonald appear to be the only contributors who can read Russian: there is a pathetic reliance on Rubinstein for biographical information.

After this chapter the editorial policy changes. Instead of further examinations of specific areas – the concertos, the chamber music with piano, the ballets – or an overall study of the evolution of Shostakovich's musical style, we are given general chapters entailing considerable overlap on "Shostakovich and the British Composer" (Bernard Stevens), "Shostakovich: politics and musical language" (not musical style) (Christopher Norris) and "Shostakovich and the Soviet System, 1925-1975" (Robert Stradling), ending with short dictionary-style articles by Alan Bush which may have been better placed at the

act *muzikalnaya komediya*, *Moskva, Cherenyuski*, incredible rubbish composed in 1958 just after the Eleventh Symphony.

Malcolm MacDonald takes up the tale of Shostakovich's later symphonies in his chapter on "Words and Music in Late Shostakovich" which includes a penetrating examination of the Yevushenko settings, the Thirteenth Symphony, and *The Execution of Stepan Razin*.

Shostakovich's word-setting, both here [in the Symphony] and later, rejects mere lyrical appeal: it is austere, usually syllabic, responding to the natural speech-inflections with repeated notes or conjunct motion – at most slightly widening its range and broadening into cantabile phrases for emotional heightening. Certainly it gains thereby a noble simplicity that sometimes brings it close to folksong. But it also limits the role of the vocal lines, enhancing their importance purely as carriers of information, as transmitters of the text: throughout these late vocal works, Shostakovich is at pains to make every word clearly audible, so that the contrast between the restraint of the voice parts and (at first) the prodigality of instrumental invention often clearly implies a counterpoint of ideas. The listener becomes aware of both correspondences and discrepancies.

The "instrumental invention" nearly dries up in the last two vocal works, the *Suite on Verses by Michelangelo* (translated by A. Efros) and the *Four Verses of Captain Lebyadkin* (a character in Dostoevsky's *The Demons*, on which Shostakovich once thought of basing an opera), and the "restraint of the voice parts" is carried to the limit. Yet the *Michelangelo Verses* – the last of which borrows its theme from a boyish opera based on Pushkin: politics and musical language" (not musical style) (Christopher Norris).

After this chapter the editorial policy changes. Instead of further examinations of specific areas – the concertos, the chamber music with piano, the ballets – or an overall study of the evolution of Shostakovich's musical style, we are given general chapters entailing considerable overlap on "Shostakovich and the British Composer" (Bernard Stevens), "Shostakovich: politics and musical language" (not musical style) (Christopher Norris) and "Shostakovich and the Soviet System, 1925-1975" (Robert Stradling), ending with short dictionary-style articles by Alan Bush which may have been better placed at the



Emmanuel Chabrier: a drawing made by Delaunay in 1873 and reproduced in Emmanuel Chabrier by Roger Delaunay, an illustrated memoir in French and English of the composer (214pp. with 183 plates. Paris: Minkoff et Laitis. 2 8266 0638 7).

beginning. The best of these is that by Bernard Stevens, who admits that apart from Britten, there are few examples of the direct stylistic influence of Shostakovich on the work of English composers. But Stevens himself is a very respectable English composer and, while he does not admit any personal influence from Shostakovich's style, he makes a good many pertinent remarks about it.

No book about Shostakovich can avoid the problem of Solomon Volkov's *Testimony: The Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich*. When I reviewed it (77.5, November 23, 1979) I observed that the self-portrait was "consistent with my own superficial impression of him and with what I have been told by his Russian and other East European colleagues" and I have recently been allowed to see Boris Schwarz's account of an interview with Makima Shostakovich who had denounced the book. Now it seems that he "does not question the authenticity of the facts, but he is well equipped to write a penetrating book on Shostakovich's musical style, but this is not it."

rather poor translation. The conductor Kirill Kondrashin has wholeheartedly endorsed the book and I have been privately informed through a reliable source in the Soviet Union that it is indeed genuine. But Christopher Norris never misses a chance in his editorial introduction and his chapter on politics and musical language to denigrate "Volkov's... well-oiled machinery of slanted reconstruction".

Eric Roseberry accepts Volkov, though with one or two cautionary qualifications. His book has the advantage of a single author, the advantage of being planned for a "life and times" series. The result is essentially a picture-book, the pictures not particularly well chosen or reproduced (there is no scene from *Lady Macbeth* or any of the ballets, for example), the text straightforward biography (good on the background) with sensible if rather superficial comment on the works. We are a third of the way through the book before we reach the First Symphony. Roseberry has shown in a doctoral thesis that he is well equipped to write a penetrating book on Shostakovich's musical style, but this is not it.

Modern maestros

Paul Driver

MEIRION BOWEN:

Michael Tippett
196pp. Robson Books. £7.95.
0 86051 137 5

PAUL GRIFFITHS:

Peter Maxwell Davies
196pp. Robson Books. £7.95.
0 86051 138 3

These are the first two volumes in a series from Robson entitled "The Contemporary Composers", edited by Nicholas Snowman, who provides a preface lightly deploring the state of the dissemination of contemporary music in Europe and America, and suggesting that his series of books (*Birtwistle and Berio* are on the way) might tentatively supplement the work of the few independently-minded musical pathfinders who do exist. He also, more accurately, claims that the books will be useful concert guides for listeners who stumble on a new piece of music and wish to learn the essential facts about its composer.

Both *Maxwell Davies* and *Tippett* should serve this purpose admirably. They are written by well-known music critics, and contain a great deal of information that is easily stored in the mind from within the text and from

the plethora of appended documentation – bibliographies, discographies, work-lists, glossaries and interviews. In *Maxwell Davies* there is a long section containing the composer's own notes and articles on his music and the interview here is of considerable substance and scope: it can be taken as the definitive one to date. The *Tippett* interview is acknowledged to be a cento cobbled from previously published statements; it is disappointingly short, but it does contain the entire text of an article written on Shostakovich's *Testimony*. Neither book is oppressively technical, though Griffiths's, in the nature of its subject, attempts more thoroughgoing analysis. Each book includes many photographs and music-examples; concerning the latter, Robson's otherwise strict standards of production seem to have been relaxed: they are printed in every conceivable size and typeface (often illegibly) in Bowen's book, and are not numbered in Griffiths's.

Bowen's book succeeds particularly well in conveying passion for Tippett's music which does not exclude relevant criticism. I agree with nearly all his value-judgments. The young eccentric these sentences would be hard to mislead. "The money his parents gave him to buy clothes he saved for his own devices. An interfering aunt made him buy a bowler hat, cane and gloves, but he threw these into the sea at Marseilles. At the same time he abandoned God, he took to marmalade, having discovered its restorative powers."

opera, *The Ice Break*, the greatness of *The Vision of Saint Augustine*. He is right when discussing the Double Concerto for Strings and the Second String Quartet to remind us how "for a composer who had to struggle so hard to produce anything equal to his ambitions, these compositions sound amazingly effortless", and of Tippett's astonishing achievement "in turning himself into a front-rank composer during his middle thirties." But Bowen ignores a valuable ingredient of Tippett's sensibility when slighting occasional pieces like the "Prince Charles Suite" and the "Divertimento on 'Selling the Round'", whose "sense of miscellany" is all their point and charm.

There are chunky discussions of the operas and symphonies and a whole chapter on *A Child of Our Time*, a work which does not perhaps deserve the amount of attention it invariably attracts. Tippett's abiding artistic concerns and visionary development are perceptively dealt with and his personality is compellingly evoked. For a cameo of Tippett's young eccentric these sentences would be hard to mislead. "The money his parents gave him to buy clothes he saved for his own devices. An interfering aunt made him buy a bowler hat, cane and gloves, but he threw these into the sea at Marseilles. At the same time he abandoned God, he took to marmalade, having discovered its restorative powers."

Although Griffiths's study of Maxwell Davies begins according to the format of the series with a chapter of biography, he is inclined to observe a more respectful and uncritical distance from his composer. Very few critical or aesthetic points are ventured; description, and a somewhat dutiful analytic scrutiny occupy most of the space. The book is in fact highly flattering to Maxwell Davies, presenting him exclusively in his own terms. While this is quite in order, one does miss a minimal application of context – for example key figures like Birtwistle, Goehr and Britten (above all) go practically unmentioned. Any writer on Davies has to sift through an oeuvre of almost unmanageable proportions; in a short book a comprehensive treatment is bound to be summary and it must be said that Griffiths's summary fashion is a brilliant one. His crisp accounts leave little room for disagreement and the breadth of his knowledge is always impressive. He has laid out his contents in four chapters of broad survey and three "Interludes" subjecting the String Quartet, *Autocritique* and *Ale Maris Stella* to close, penetrating analysis. The book inevitably peters out because its last chapter, "Par Oxidants", reflecting Davies's vastly increased rate of production since he moved north in 1970, has to deal with more music than the other three put together. But this is the first book to be published on Maxwell Davies and will unquestionably be useful to musicians.

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Jonathan Cape

commentary

Scottish loyalty and sacrifice

Douglas Dunn

Clydebuilt
7.84 Scotland at the Mitchell Theatre, Glasgow and on tour

7.84 Scotland's revival of five plays dealing with Scottish working-class issues and characters is more than an archaeological exercise underlining the dispiriting sameness of time and now. It asserts the continuity between 7.84's zestful, committed and vigorously inventive style and the concerns of earlier Glasgow-based companies whose loyalties were firmly left-wing, radical and excitingly of their times. Playgoers in the west of Scotland had apparently noticed a similarity between 7.84 Scotland, the old Glasgow Workers Theatre Group and the Glasgow Unity Players. GWTG was a phenomenon the 1930s, in all likelihood hardened by the cultural traditions of the Scottish working-class movement, stretching back to the Mechanics Institutes and other self-help groups. It grew out of the St George Players which had already performed plays by O'Neill, Theodore Dreiser and Elmer Rice. Founded in 1937, the GWTG was not unpredictably put on Clifford Odets's *Waiting for Lefty* as well as Harry Trot's vivid piece of agitprop *UAB Scotland* which 7.84 revive on a double-bill with Ewan MacColl's *Johnny Noble*. Two other plays in the season come from the stock of the Glasgow Unity Players, *Gold in his Boots* by George Munro and *Ena Lamont Stewart's Men Should Weep*, both first performed in 1947. From farther back, 7.84 also retrieve Joe Corrie's *In Time of Strife* (1927).

Intriguingly, *Clydebuilt*, the blanket title for the series, puts forward the interesting notion that a large slice of recent Scottish drama has simply been neglected. In a foreword to the season's souvenir programme, John McGrath lays much of the blame for this forgetfulness on the unfortunate James Bridie. "It should be a cause for concern," he writes, that Bridie should be regarded as "THE Scottish playwright of the 40s and 50s" — by virtue of playing, to largely middle-class audiences, the works of Joe Corrie, and the Unity plays, and that they ARE remembered, but by the "wrong people".

It seems a pity that Bridie should be chastised with the meanness of his prim and pallid audience. As much as anyone, he knew that the cultural ills of Scotland are more accurately traced to a pious and feckless populism to its artists and writers. Admittedly, though, the assumption existed that the Scottish theatre had, until recently, been disgracefully ill-served by literary talent, while writers went miserably without encouragement from the Scottish theatre. That is no longer the case, but a virtue of 7.84's recent season is that it portrays how the Scottish theatre could have been much more productive, pertinent and lively had an important drive in its tradition not been allowed to peter out, surviving for too long only in the memories of the elderly, their anecdotes and reminiscences now largely vindicated.

Gold in his Boots dramatizes the old Scottish calamity of success as an invitation to ruin. In this case, the success is produced by footballing talent, which like the ability to box, takes us peculiarly close to a Scots myth, that of the lad, or 'peirte', whose efforts to make something of himself turn out to be a curse. Indeed, George Munro's play strikes me as an invention of the *Sunday Post* with sentimental folkiness stripped away, a hurtful dose of "The Browns" comic strip. Jonathan Watson plays the young footballer with a perspective blend of jauniness and conscientious self-defeat. Opening with a leisurely and convincing first act, *Gold in his Boots* soon proves that its author had bitten off more

than he could chew. By the second act events are beginning to go by in a rush: it is as if Munro, newspaperman that he was, had realized that his deadline was creeping up on him. Yet if the play's haste in the second act fights against John McGrath's direction and the spirited performances of the cast, the impression it leaves is far from disagreeable. Here is the kind of realism with which Scottish dramatists should have persevered through the 1950s and 1960s. With some dexterity, much conviction, and the proof of inside knowledge, Munro moves from vivid scenes of family drama (the best thing in the play) to sporting and journalistic corruption, religious bigotry of a casually distressing kind, and changing-room scenes. The end result is a graphic if flawed depiction of how a working-class lad's talent for a game (or anything else) can turn out to be worse than a mixed blessing.

Most of these plays have family life as a common theme, if only because loyalties and sacrifice loomed large in their authors' minds. Even a stylized ballad-play like *Johnny Noble* makes it clear that it is as much concerned with the life of a community, with shared destinies, as realistic dramas such as *In Time of Strife* and *Men Should Weep*. Joe Corrie was a miner himself and knew what he was writing about in his portrayal of family tensions during the General Strike. Even so, one would have expected a writer of Corrie's natural gifts to have resisted the Scottish penchant for pawk humour in a play otherwise penetrating in its rejection of defeatism and its reach into authentically tragic situations. Arguments could be made for swift patter being the Scottish worker's verbal survival-kit, his so-called resilience. But it can also come across as mindless banter, like jokes at a funeral, which writers more intellectually astringent might have sought to criticize. There is, too, a lingering suspicion of it being there to sweeten the pill with the sort of dialogue which Scottish audiences are guilelessly prone to improve, spicing graphic ardour with entertainment more than rounding out a balanced view of life. Given the nostalgic habits of Scots in general (not just those who go to the theatre) that automatically piloted, scarcely edifying "humour" delights the ears of the general reader, whether in age or in spirit; it perpetuates a self-satisfied, self-defeatingly complacent revel in suffering, an attitude of "If the worst comes to the worst, we can eye laugh at it". It is a limitation that at times seems inbuilt in the Scots mind (Clydebuilt, if you like) and no play in 7.84's season does anything or says anything to show it up for what it is, the enjoyment of a low horizon.

That, too, is a flaw in Gilles Faverge's visually arresting interpretation of *Men Should Weep*. At least one character stoops to the old Glasgow comic's trick of a humorous mispronunciation — "casualty" — a habit, which, if less common in Glasgow than it was, is none the less condescending when reproduced on the stage, and indicative, perhaps, of a writer being a shade too high above her material. In spite of it, though, the play's impact is forceful and compassionate. Set in a Glasgow pizzeria in the 1930s, it richly exploits the anguish and fatigue of the face of her husband's unemployment (a topical spectre in all five plays), her youngest son's illness, her daughter-in-law's frustrated sexuality, her daughter's opting for a life of glamour while remaining faithful to her origins. Jazz music in the background — late 1920s Duke Ellington and Beasie Smith — provides a secondary, if understated, comment on deprivation, although it does, in many Glasgow families at the time were listening to them. In some ways the play is reminiscent of American movies and plays — *Dead End*, perhaps, less the gangster, the

hero worship and macho attractions of gangsterdom (interestingly, the only law-breaking in *Men Should Weep* is pilfering and purse-snatching) — *Street Scene*, the ambience of Elmer Rice and Clifford Odets, and something of the shut-in atmosphere of O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh* with a similar sense of being outside time in a backwater of misfortune, humiliation and unhappiness. Very little British let alone Scottish drama comes to mind in thinking about the pedigree of *Men Should Weep*. That, too, emphasizes the vitality and social acuity that were lost through the neglect of that side of the Scottish theatre's achievement in the hands of the Glasgow Unity Players. It might mean little to the British stage as a whole (curiously disrespectful of Scottishness as it is) but the loss of these densely populated, characterful plays dug a large hole in Scotland, which for years was without a truthful dramatic image of itself.

UAB Scotland (UAB stands for Unemployment Assistance Board) and *Johnny Noble* I saw in a church hall in Perth. Put on during the STUC's conference, they drew an audience largely of trades union delegates. In

Carefully blurred

Jonathan Keates

Last Chronicles
Cottesloe Theatre

The modern mania for reviving everything that can possibly be revived, rather as if we were afraid that culture was suddenly going to disappear altogether, has no doubt succeeded in somewhere resuscitating Trollope's two plays. The lurid verse drama called *The Noble Jilt*, and *Did He Steal It?* — a dramatization of the main plot of *The Last Chronicle of Barset* — may by now have featured as tailpieces at some Trollopean junkie by an American university or the reformed offerings of a college dramatic society. At the Cottesloe, where they are more charity of their public, we are given instead the writer himself in a platform digest of the *Autobiography*.

It requires a certain imaginative confidence to conceive of Trollope's life as having anything very much in it that will grab audiences in a generation reared in the belief that Victorians are only interesting when being morbid, psychotic or depraved. A balding, middle-aged, happily married post office functionary, with misguided political ambitions, an unquenchable enthusiasm for hunting and an obsessive habit of producing a daily quota of written words before breakfast is an unimpressive figure to bring on to the Cottesloe stage, but Michael McCaffery's entertainment succeeds, at least partially, in conveying something of Trollope's comprehensive humanity, so doggedly extended and explored in the novels.

No attempt has, alas, been made at a looklike. Instead of the pebble-lensed, piggy-eyed, flossy-bearded, Sorotates, morose aggressively masking sensibility, we are offered the totally elegant Ben Aris, got up like the master of ceremonies at the ballroom of a spa. He is flanked by Robert Oates, apologetic and pugnacious, and by Susan Porrett, mockingly upstaged in what can only be the very same *maître antique* costume. Graeme Grantly took on her wedding tour with Lord Dumbello. Both convey the impression of seeming more substantially Trollope than Ben Aris, who has strayed in from the pages of *Quixote* or Mrs Henry Wood.

Paradoxically, the director's almost total reliance upon the *Autobiography* limits, and muddies what might otherwise be an absorbing exercise in bringing the novel to life. For the precise reason that the book itself is such a defiant essay in reticence.

evitably, it was an evening of preaching to the converted, although touches of genuine inspiration in Harry Trott's "living newspaper" did not go unnoticed, and neither did moments of poetry, or the boisterous simplicity and verve of *Johnny Noble*. A love story set in the 1930s and early 1940s, *Johnny Noble* includes a timeless ballad-like theme of a journey of self-discovery and a search for work as well as a knowledge of what the world is like. It has the strange effect of taking standard working-class problems back to their folk roots. Both these short plays are good, expressive theatre, but as church hall they are magnificent, rousing active pieces.

7.84 Scotland will perform *Men Should Weep* during the Edinburgh Festival at the Church Hill Theatre, Edinburgh, August 16-August 21, and August 23-September 11 at the Moray House Theatre, Edinburgh, then at the Dundee Repertory Theatre, September 14-18. *Johnny Noble* will be performed at 3pm at the Moray House Theatre, August 25-September 4. *In Time of Strife* will be toured in Edinburgh and Fife during January-February 1983.

Amour proper

John Hope Mason

Bérénice
Lyric Studio, Hammersmith

Racine's plays depict a violent world. From the obsessive hatreds of *La Thébaïde* to the harsh cruelties of *Andronicus*, they portray events and emotions with a fierce intensity that is both frightening and compelling. His characters pursue their goals with a relentless energy. His force is elemental. Checked in one direction it breaks out in another. In a few moments the joy at the thought of possession can become the relish at the idea of destruction. It is a pitiless world, and the fact that Racine did up believing in the severe God of the Jansenists is not in the least surprising.

There is one exception to this pattern — *Bérénice*. This play is wholly human, it is neither inhuman nor superhuman nor supernatural. It is made without a single death, it never strikes a cruel note. It is written with Racine's mastery economy and concentration and the events move forward in their usual inexorable way, yet the pace does not have that characters is at the mercy of a fierce inner drive. On the contrary, they are as human as you or I, and what they suffer from is the most human of emotions, love. In that respect, above all, *Bérénice* is different.

Although the motive force in most of Racine's plays is *amour* the emotion involved is not love but passion. Indeed, it seems doubtful whether an *Hermione* or a *Phèdre* would ever go beyond the ecstatic regions of love. But in *Bérénice* the three main characters are not only in love, they have had time to get to know the object of their passion, to see that person for what he or she really is. The experience of the play is not of passion, that is thwarted but of love that must end.

The action is set in Rome in 79 AD. This is Imperial Rome but the Republic is not so remote that all memories of it are gone. Vespasian

has just died and his son Titus has been made Emperor. For five years Titus has been in love with Bérénice, but she is Queen of Palestine; Rome forbids its leaders to marry foreigners, and Rome hates royalty. When Antony became involved with Cleopatra he provoked his own destruction. The correct model is that set out in the founding myth of the Aeneid: Aeneas left Dido. Now Titus must leave Bérénice.

The play opens with the third principal character, Antiochus. He is also a foreigner in Rome, a Middle Eastern king, and he also loves Bérénice. Ignorant of Roman pressures he presumes that now Titus has been made Emperor he will marry Bérénice, and he comes to say his final farewell to her. The opening sets the tone for everything that is to follow, it conveys a sense of imminent grief, of impending catastrophe. The desolate and magical line Antiochus speaks to Bérénice — "Dans l'Orient désert quel deuil mon ennui" — echoes through all the subsequent scenes. Titus cannot bring himself to tell Bérénice they must part; when she is first told (by Antiochus) she refuses to believe it; when he then faces her he cannot spell it out; when he finally does so she cannot take it in. All the time there is an appalling sense of emptiness approaching, an unthinkable prospect of separation, banishment, exile. A world is dissolving in front of our eyes. The play ends with a moral tag — may this instance be an example to others — but these words are merely conventional; what we feel is a sombre pain, that *tristesse majoestueuse* Racine writes of in his preface.

The problem of translating Racine into English is well-known, and the problem of performing the plays is almost as great. Nowadays, however, we have a new solution to the latter, which is to reduce the scale of the theatre, to bring the audience to the actors. This eliminates the difficulty of the actors having to project over sustained periods intense emotion in a formal style. The Hammersmith production, by Christopher Fettes, succeeds very largely in these terms. It is simple, direct and well-focused. The demands on the actors are still considerable but that is the nature of



One of Jacob de Gheyn's engravings of Officers and Soldiers of the Bodyguard of Emperor Rudolph II, a set of which is to be sold at Sotheby's on June 18.

Amour proper

John Hope Mason

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The action is set in Rome in 79

commentary

Ashbery and old lace

Peter Porter

The Heroes; The Philosopher
Café Theatre Upstairs

The Greeks themselves were fond of parodying and subverting their gods and epics. Sophisticated set in among commentators on Homeric heroes well before the Hellenistic Age. Euripides based his anti-heroic version of Helen in Egypt (not so anti-heroic in dramatic terms) on Stesichorus's poem of six generations previously. Thereafter, European dramatists and poets have had a field-day reinterpreting classical stories, with modern academic writers keeping up the strike rate. Where would French playwrights and filmmakers be without the full roll-call from Lempre? So John Ashbery is working an old vein in his amusing and effective play *The Heroes*, which has just completed a short run at the Café Theatre Upstairs, Charing Cross Road, presented, with a second Ashbery play, *The Philosopher*, by a young company called Buick of Signs.

The Heroes and *The Philosopher* are early Ashbery, and are written in prose, but his characteristic qualities of non sequitur and good humour are present throughout. *The Heroes* is very much more amiable and lightweight than the kind of modern refurbishing of myth familiar to us from the *Myth Reunion* and *The Cocktail Party*. It shares with

The Cocktail Party a drawing-room or house party ethos. Achilles is host, with Patroclus the most moody of the residents, and Theseus, Ulysses, Circe and the odd guard and cupbearer milling about. Theseus's account of his experiences in the Labyrinth is charmingly presented as the star guest's unavoidable story which must be related to each member of the house party. The anachronisms are genial — Theseus in the position of a person who believes that data is still alive — and the heroes are not so much diminished as transported to a world where epic is either a giggle or a state of mental delusion.

The Chorus (a personable lady partygoer) keeps up the required Greek tone: "I have seen many people in every possible relation to each other and I have never seen any good come of it." A little later she announces, "So far this play has been easy. From now on it's going to be more difficult to follow." But it isn't, and the characters stay suave and dubiously self-explanatory to the end, which has a sort of "Inspector Call's" tinge and is firmly downbeat. En route, there are some of Ashbery's attractive throw-away lines of poetry: "It is the querulously blue from this old slept-on face." There is little attempt at parody of Greek drama (nothing like Housman's immortal lines). Ashbery leaves the heroes "as statues on the face of the building", even if they are aware of being "disfigured by trash of folklore, excrement of centuries".

All this might have been heavy-handed if the company had not acted so well and if Simon Usher's direction had not been so sure and inventive. I continue to marvel at the high level of acting among young British companies. This was demonstrated recently when *The Dog Beneath the Skin* was revived at the Half Moon Theatre, and now Buick of Signs has emphasized it. Outstanding among the performers are Michael Darby as Ulysses and Mark Knox as Theseus.

Darby also plays Professor Ambleside in *The Philosopher*. Ambleside is an American Egyptologist who arrives mysteriously at Woodlawn Hall, an old house on the Hudson River where assorted folk have assembled to hear the reading of the will of eccentric collector and millionaire Jeremiah Maples. We are in highly recognizable country: the world of 1930s films featuring young girls being protected by and falling in love with wise-cracking ace reporters, plus a supporting cast of retainers, ludicrous policemen, sinister foreigners, escaped lunatics, Bronx prizefighters and their floozies, and so on. Ashbery's parody of *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *The Cat and the Canary* and their like, was written before the rash of children's cartoons such as *Scoby-Doo*, but shares with them a good-humoured love of the golden age of American commercial gothic. There is nothing highbrow in his parody; it is all disarmingly pastoral, and the actors and actresses respond with just the right degree of exaggeration and high spirits. Here Myria Loban, as wispy-haired, bespectacled Aunt Emily, comes into her own.

Buick of Signs was formed to bring less well-known American plays to British audiences. The company, as its title suggests, is drawn to works by Frank O'Hara, Ashbery, Kenneth Koch, and the New York School, but Tennessee Williams and other mainstream figures are within its scope. Ashbery is hardly new to the States, but his early work is still largely unknown here. *The Heroes* and *The Philosopher* return next month to the Riverside Studios, and, as well as the New York School — Jackson Pollock, David Smith and Mark Rothko. All thirty-four of Rauschenberg's drawings for Dante's *Inferno* will be shown. The exhibition ends in the Minimalist work of Sol LeWitt.

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D.J. Casley and D.A. Lury

This book, which is intended for graduate students of development studies and for government officials and statisticians, is now available in paperback, £4.95

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Edited by Brian W. Hogwood and Michael Keating

This book examines the major institutions of regional government in England including regional offices of central government, regional water authorities, and regional health authorities. It also analyses a range of broader questions, including the administration of regional industrial policy, the boundaries of regions, expenditure patterns in the regions, and the debate on regional reform. £18.50

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to the editor

'The Mathematical Experience'

Sir. — The review by Roger Penrose (May 14) contains a number of false or misleading statements in the philosophy of mathematics. None of the errors noted below concerns the book itself.

1. "Cantor's theory of infinite sets led to the Russell-Whitehead-Frege attempt to build the foundations of mathematics on the principles of logic (logicism)." It also led to paradoxes. There are at least two errors here. (a) Frege's important 1884 book, which presents a logicist account of arithmetic as reducible to logic, displays no Cantorian influence; indeed, the approaches of Cantor and Frege are philosophically and mathematically fundamentally different, a difference only concealed by classifying both as Platonic realists. (b) Cantor's approach, unlike Frege's, did not lead to paradoxes, but rather to the discovery of one notion of set. Russell's paradox, discovered originally for a system of Frege, led to the presumably consistent theory of Principia Mathematica (1910-13), a theory of types which might count as a set theory, but which for various reasons fails to be logicist. At least one (presumably consistent) development of Frege's original approach was noticed briefly by Russell in 1904-06 and was elaborated in W. V. O. Quine's *Mathematical Logic* (revised edition 1951; ironically the system of the first edition was inconsistent). Quine's theory, though formulated in the usual language of the theory of sets and classes, is, however, not generally regarded as a theory of sets.

2. The logicist approach "led in the early part of this century to the mathematical philosophy of formalism." According to the formalist philosophy (which may itself be regarded as a development of logicism), mathematics is reduced, in effect, to a kind of (meaningless) game. Two further things are wrong here. First, formalism is older than logicism and the sort of game formalism quoted goes back at least to 1872 (Heine). Second, a spectrum of formalist views was vigorously opposed, not always politely, by Frege, who criticized (among others) Hankel, Heine, Thomas and Hilbert. Nevertheless, *pace* Penrose, the view that "mathematics is no more than a meaningless game cannot easily be ascribed to Hilbert."

3. The statement that there are, for example, 100 successive 7s in the decimal expansion of π is not, again *pace* Penrose, asserted by intuitionists "to be neither true nor false at the present time". They neither assert the statement nor reject it, and no more do they assert that it is neither true nor false. Intuitionists prefer not to use the word "false", but will not accept as a principle that a statement is either true or to be rejected, holding that this disjunction is assertible only if one of its disjuncts is so.

4. Mathematical Platonists and realists do not generally ascribe to mathematical existence "a higher degree of perfection than mere physical existence". Some followers of St. Anselm may have taken such a theological view, but a more restrained contemporary realism holds that mathematical entities are unavoidable, the sort of existence involved might be logically akin to that of such simple logical truths as "anything which has each of two properties P and G has property F ".

5. Penrose professes himself unable "to understand how the strict formalist view can be continued to be upheld in the light of Gödel's devastating... argument". Gödel's work is indeed of quite fundamental importance for mathematical logic and the foundations of mathematics, and his first incompleteness theorem of 1931 establishes not only that in any formal system there are sentences neither provable nor refutable, but also that some such sentences can be seen to express what are called arithmetical truths. But a formalist who rejects all truth in mathematics, even that of $2+2=4$, need not have his philosophy disturbed by Gödel's results. Some formalist views may be antecedently implausible, but the case has not been established for the purely philosophical significance of Gödel's theorem claimed by Penrose.

6. "We have no clear reason to believe, as yet, that non-Cantorian set theories can exist..." What might count as such clear reason? Some non-Cantorian set theories, presumably consistent, are incompatible with the standard theory, and it is by no means clear what it would amount to for there to be one true set theory. Plausibly, someone could be a realist about arithmetic without being a realist about the continuum hypothesis — or, again, a realist about that without ascribing a determinate truth-value to set-theoretic claims for the existence of certain very large infinities. Perhaps it is not at present judged reasonable to ask a realist to state how far his realism

extends, but it is surely in order to ask what sort of considerations might determine the extent of a realist commitment.

Many philosophers have erred in what they have written about mathematics. Nevertheless, philosophy of mathematics also has intellectual standards, and is not just a rag-bag of prejudices.

May I conclude by expressing a wholehearted welcome for the publication of an article on a numerate book by a numerate reviewer?

J. M. B. MOSS.
Department of Mathematics, King's College, Strand, London WC2.

Public Lending Right

Sir. — Surely there must be other author-illustrators as outraged as I am at the moment. I discovered recently that children's picture books cannot be registered for Public Lending Right unless they contain fifty per cent text on a single page. As I receive royalties from my books I naturally expected to be able to benefit from PLR — which has been so hard fought for and long awaited.

Picture books are expensive, so that many children can only see them by borrowing from a public library. My own books are bought by libraries throughout the country and widely borrowed. I would be interested if someone could explain why I, and others like me, should be treated differently from our fellow writers.

JOANNA TROUGHTON,
109 Daws Lane, London NW7.

Robert Graves

Sir. — At the end of his interesting review (May 21) of Martin Seymour-Smith's biography of Robert Graves, Anthony Burgess quotes the following lines from Graves:

He continues quick and dull in his clear images;
I continue slow and sharp in my broken images.
He, in a new confusion of his understanding;
I, in a new understanding of my confusion.

But the crucial distinction I wished to make was between the ghostliness of Echo in poetry and new kinds of truth or fact, what was seen but never seen in words. The reader of the last stanza of "Afterwards" suddenly hears something new: it may already be a part of his experience but it has never appeared in language before. Most have seen a

Mr Burgess ends his article with the comment "he being everybody else". Perhaps there is a sense, clear to Burgess, in which "he" is "everybody else", but in fact Graves was thinking of a particular fellow poet. I happen to know this because the poem fascinated me and when I first met Graves in Devonshire during the last war, I asked him who it was. He said: "Oh, there was a chap called Humbert Wolfe who was writing poetry at the time I wrote that, about whom there was a great deal of fuss." Of course, I do not remember his exact words but that was the sense of them. They have remained in my mind because they struck me as odd since one thing I did not think about Humbert Wolfe was that he wrote strikingly clear images. I do not want to spoil Mr Burgess's (to me) slightly cryptic conclusion, and I hope it does not do so to point this out.

STEPHEN SPENDER,
15 Loudoun Road, London NW8.

Allusion in Poetry

Sir. — Charles Madge and Tom Paulin (Letters, May 21) take up a point I raised in my review (May 7) of John Hollander's *The Figure of Echo*, and which seems to me of exceptional critical interest, particularly today. I am glad two poets take the same view, even in disagreement.

Tom Paulin points out that Hardy's "Afterwards" is full of echoes, even the lines which I quoted about the "bell of quittance". That Hardy intended a conscious reference, either playful or otherwise, to Mark 10:34, in the bell's tones cut off by the "crossing breeze" "Till they rise again", seems to me doubtful, although his mind and style were so full of biblical phrases that it could happen unconsciously, and it certainly strengthened the argument for Echo.

But the crucial distinction I wished to make was between the ghostliness of Echo in poetry and new kinds of truth or fact, what was seen but never seen in words. The reader of the last stanza of "Afterwards" suddenly hears something new: it may already be a part of his experience but it has never appeared in language before. Most have seen a

wave, but not really until they have seen Keats's wave "down whose green back the short-liv'd foam all hoar, Bursts gradual, with a wayward indulgence" — or seen men with licence-plates on a station platform, but not absolutely till they sprang through two lines of Larkin's very echoic poem "I remember I remember".

It used to be a cliché to say that the language of poetry "disimprisons the soul of fact". Not any more, in our present critical climate of metaphor and structure, which kills off belief in words as Nietzsche and the nineteenth century felt belief in God. I have always felt that de Saussure's observation, echoed by every critic today, about the arbitrary nature of words, showed that he had no idea — why should he? — what poetry was all about. Its primary function is precisely to transcend, or seem to, the solitude of language, and make those words the only ones for these experiences. Echo underwrites the process, but the process itself is to give words the natural inevitability of things.

JOHN BAYLEY,
St Catherine's College, Oxford.

Camels and Others

Sir. — The camel is not the only animal on whose sexual behaviour some interesting light is thrown by orally transmitted verse. A well-known Oxford rhyme records another case of non-cooperation by, at any rate, the hedgehog:

If you try to bugger a hedgehog
It rolls itself into a ball
And eminent scientists tell us
It never gets buggered at all.

But further extensive researches have incontrovertibly shown. That comparative safety, at Kneb, is enjoyed by the hedgehog alone.

As Harry V. Kemp demonstrates, however (Letters, May 21), a definitive text can never be established for literature of this nature. In the penultimate line the names of at least five other colleges would seem as easily.

CHARLES MONTEITH,
3 Queen Square, London WC1.

Among this week's contributors

GERALD ABRAHAM'S *The Concise Oxford History of Music* was published in 1980.

MARK AMORY is the editor of *The Letters of Evelyn Waugh*, 1980.

OLIVER M. ASHFORD was editor of the *World Meteorological Organization Bulletin* from 1952 to 1975.

PAUL BAILEY'S most recent novel is *Old Soldiers*, 1980.

NICOLAS BARKER is Head of Conservation at the British Library.

ALAN BELL is Librarian of Rhodes House, Oxford.

LORD BELLER'S books include *The Intellectual in Politics*, 1970.

DOUGLAS DUNN'S most recent collection of poems is *St. Kilda's Parliament*, 1981.

DONALD FANGER is Professor of Slavic and Comparative Literature at Harvard. His most recent book is *The Creation of Nikolai Gogol*, 1979.

SIR WILLIAM HALEY was editor of *The Times* from 1952-1966.

TIM HILTON'S books include *Picasso*, 1976.

JOHN HOPE MASON'S *The Indigenous Religions* was published in 1979.

ROBERT ISON is an Honorary Research Fellow of University College London, where he is Associate Director of the Survey of English Usage.

M. V. JONES'S books include *Dostoyevsky: the Novel of Discard*, 1976.

JONATHAN KEATES teaches English at the City of London School.

ERIC KORN is an antiquarian bookseller in London.

W. M. LAMONT'S books include *Richard Baxter and the Millennium*, 1979.

HERMIONE LEE'S *Elizabeth Bowen: An Estimation* was published last year.

LAURENCE LERNER'S collections of poems include *The Man I Killed*, 1980.

MARGARET LYTTELTON is the author of *Baroque Architecture in Classical Antiquity*, 1974.

P. J. PARISH is Bonar Professor of Modern History, University of Dundee. His books include *Slavery: The Many Faces of a Southern Institution*, 1979.

PETER PORTER'S collections of poems include *English Subjunctives*, 1981.

ANTHONY QUINTON is President of Trinity College, Oxford. His books include *The Politics of Imperfection*, 1978, and *Francis Bacon*, 1980.

SIR WILLIAM REES-MOGG was editor of *The Times* from 1967-1981.

DON RIMINGTON is Senior Lecturer in Chinese Studies at the University of Leeds.

LORD ROLL is the author of *A History of Economic Thought*, 1973.

IVAN ROOTS is the editor of *Cromwell*, 1974.

DAVID SNOW is the author of *A Study of Blackbirds*, 1958, and *The Web of Adaptation*, 1976.

ARTHUR TERRY is Professor of Literature at the University of Essex. His books include *Catalan Literature*, 1975.

WILLIAM THOMAS is a Student of Christ Church, Oxford.

CHRISTOPHER THORNE'S books include *Allies of a Kind: the United States, Britain and the War Against Japan 1914-1945*, 1978.

JENNIFER UGLOW is the editor of *Essays on Literature and Art by Walter Pater*, 1975.

KENDALL WALTON is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Michigan.

J. E. WATKINS is Professor of Medical Microbiology at the Welsh National School of Medicine.

J. J. WILKES is Professor of Archaeology of the Roman Provinces at the University of London.

EDMOND WRIGHT is Director of the Institute of United States Studies at the University of London.

J. M. ZIMAN is Professor of Physics at the University of Bristol. His *Puzzles, Problems and Enigmas* was published last year.

REFERENCE

Avifauna in action

David Snow

ROGER TORY PETERSON and VIRGINIA MARIE PETERSON:

Audubon's Birds of America
435pp, with 917 illustrations including 482 in full colour. Heinemann. £65. 434 58701 X

Audubon's Birds of America (1827-1838), in double-elfant folio, is the largest bird book ever produced. It contained 435 plates, measured 39½x29½ inches, and the heaviest volume weighed 56 lb. All the birds were reproduced life-size, so that herons and flamingos had to have their heads bowed down — even in this gigantic format — and small birds were lost on the page. The 134 complete sets that survive are priceless, and single prints from sets that have been broken up may fetch thousands of pounds. In the circumstances few have an opportunity to judge the quality of the work at first hand. In 1937 Macmillan produced a comparatively cheap edition in comparatively small size (12½x9 inches). The quality of the colour reproduction was not very good, but it gave some idea of the magnitude of Audubon's achievement. In 1966 Michael Joseph published reproductions of the original water-colours, from which the engravings were made, in a limited two-volume edition, but these are very different from the coloured engravings of *The Birds of America*. They enhance Audubon's reputation as a great artist but, lacking the backgrounds and details of vegetation which were put in by Audubon's team of assistants, one of whom was an accomplished botanical artist, they give no idea of the highly wrought and decorated designs of the finished work. It is only now, with the publication of this "baby elephant folio", that one can get an adequate impression of the great work other than by access to the rare originals.

This "baby elephant" is no mean size. It is not so much its dimensions, impressive though they are (15½x12 inches), but its thickness (over 3 inches) and weight (16 lb) that are remarkable. It must be the heaviest bird book published in the last few decades. It is beautifully produced, well bound, and at £65 is remarkably good value. No doubt all this was possible because publication was sponsored by the Audubon Society and large sales may be expected to the society's huge membership.

The publishers claim that the colour reproduction is very faithful to the original, a claim that is not easy to check but which seems justified. Some of the smaller birds are nearly the same size as in the original edition; the bigger birds have been considerably reduced. Instead of the haphazard sequence of the original edition, they are arranged in systematic order and the modern vernacular and scientific names are used, with Audubon's names, if different, in brackets. The plates are grouped in batches of twenty to forty, each of which is preceded by a section of text by the two Petersons giving brief accounts of the birds illustrated. These are not dry entries of handbook type but are enjoyable miniature essays mentioning points of interest relating to the plates and the circumstances in which Audubon found and drew the birds.

Rather unexpectedly, after the introductory passage on Audubon's life and work, and only marginally relevant to the book's main purpose, there is a twenty-five-page essay by Roger Tory Peterson on American bird painters past and present, well illustrated with forty-six colour reproductions, showing the whole range of bird painting from the stiff portraits of Audubon's two predecessors, Mark Catesby and Alexander Wilson, to the most recent work of Peterson, one of a highly articulate group of American bird painters whose writing enhances one's enjoyment of his own and others' work. This section of the book, which is something of a bonus, confirms my half-formed opinion that the last twenty-five years have seen the rise and

flowering of an outstanding school of North American bird painters.

Audubon's work has always been controversial. He imbued his birds with the restless energy that marked his whole career and enabled him to carry through a grandiose project of publication of which *Birds of America* was only a part. Today, with eyes educated by the camera and by generations of bird artists who have built on foundations laid by their predecessors, we know what birds look like, whether sitting quietly or engaged in a rapid aerial manoeuvre. To remind ourselves that it is not easy to draw a bird in action without this background of accumulated experience and special knowledge, we have only to look at a flying bird in a landscape by any artist earlier than the nineteenth century. The most gifted draftsman produced the most un-life-like, aerodynamically impossible renderings. Thus Audubon attempted a dauntingly difficult task: all his birds are in action, not one is just standing or perching in the conventional attitude in which they are shown in a modern field-guide. He developed the technique of wiring up freshly shot specimens in the attitude that he wanted to illustrate; and since he was an acute observer of birds in life, as well as a skilled draughtsman and painter, he was often very successful. Only his flying birds are failures more often than not; his pair of Blue-winged Teal

Parson's pecking order

Redmond O'Hanlon

F. O. MORRIS:

British Birds: A Selection from the Original Work
Edited and with an introduction by Tony Soper
240pp. HPR Publicity. £20. 0 906671 37 X

Ten years old and standing in Beach's Second Hand Bookshop in Salisbury, I noticed, one incandescent week, in the dusky bay on the right which was labelled, high up, NATURAL HISTORY, eight dull volumes full of the most beautiful pictures in the world. About a thousand years of pocket-money, two pounds and ten shillings, secured them all, even A. F. Lydon's little grebe, for instance, engraved by Benjamin Fawcett and hand-coloured, the dabchick, round as a baby's buttock, and seen from ten inches away along the surface of the river as if one was a water rat.

An identical edition, two Grosvenor Hotel Book Fairs ago, was offered at £600, which is an excellent reason for this reprint. The photographically reproduced plates have lost much of the hypnotic attraction of the originals — but the text itself, in this first of a mere two volumes (the second will include the gamebirds and the waterfowl) has lost little by Tony Soper's necessary disregard of the Egyptian Vulture, the Nutcracker, the Red-winged Starling, the Passenger Pigeon, the Esquimaux Curlew, the Buff-breasted Sandpiper, the Great Auk or the Laughing Gull.

And its value has not been much diminished by his heavy editing of the entries that remain. For the Reverend F. O. Morris (1810-1893), sometime Commoner of Worcester College, Oxford, once he was happily settled in the living of Nunburnholme in the East Riding of Yorkshire (where he stayed for the rest of his life, and where he fathered three sons, six daughters, and twenty works in natural history), wrote in the rectory drawing-room every evening, undisturbed by gossip, late night, piano-playing, or by importunate friends, the entries that remain. For the Reverend F. O. 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An eye-view of empire

J. J. Wilkes

TIM CORNELL and JOHN MATTHEWS

Atlas of the Roman World
240pp. Phaidon. £17.95.
0 7148 2152 7

The lasting impact of Michael Rosovtzeff's social and economic histories of the Roman Empire (1926) and the Hellenistic World (1941) owed not a little to their many illustrations of relevant material evidence, paintings, mosaics, sculptures and inscriptions. This presentation was in contrast to that of the Cambridge Ancient History in which the text was supported by maps and time-charts but with illustrations set apart and edited independently in volumes which, for the most part, remained little used on library shelves. Such precedents are a proper background to a consideration of this splendid production by two younger British ancient historians, Tim Cornell of University College London and John Matthews of The Queen's College, Oxford. Presented as a "cultural atlas", their volume is not the first to present the Roman world in all its aspects through a text

supported by an abundance of maps, plans and colour illustrations. They have avoided the danger of huge colour-spreads which serve only to dazzle the reader doggedly seeking to follow a disjointed and fragmented text. Here the maps are designed and deployed in close support of the text and a few illustrations, with most of the big pictures correlated into special features. Cornell's section on early Italy and the Roman Republic down to the dictatorship of Sulla is a first-rate survey which presents succinctly the state of knowledge, or rather of the argument, concerning early Rome, its institutions, society and relations with other peoples in Italy. Much of the newly discovered archaeological evidence is described and illustrated, and always to good effect. Thus our general notion of early Roman society as being "dominated by closed groups or bands under aristocratic leadership" is made clearer by the inscription discovered at Satricum in Latium in 1977. Dated to around 500 BC, it bears a dedication to the war god Mars by "the comrades of Publius Valerius", who may be identified with Valerius Poplicola, by tradition one of the first consuls of the Roman Republic.

At the other end of the Roman world John Matthews's text and

accompanying pictures are a welcome distraction from the view of the Later Roman Empire as a rigid hierarchy confining a mass of toilers bound by laws of hereditary obligation, and supporting a vast bureaucracy serving the endless courts of ineffectual emperors. We are reminded that the Church had no constitutional position but survived only as a pressure-group, albeit privileged and well organized; also the widely used label of "corruption" needs to be explained as the workings of "a pluralist society with a multiplicity of vested interests, impinging on their government as effectively as their influence allowed". Overall one could have done with more anecdotal detail in the text which could have served to illuminate some of the pictures, though one welcomes the image of simplicity in a Roman commander of the third century BC found by foreign envoys cooking his own supper of turnips and, in the fourth century AD, the cuts in imperial staff made by the new emperor Julian, causing the sackings of barbers, cooks and eunuchs.

The maps are clear and comprehensive and for the most part are well contrived to relieve the text from the tedium of military narrative and the like. Absence of any cross-reference between the text and the

lengthy captions to the maps is an irritation and results in repetition in several places. An immense quantity of detailed information is purveyed through the maps and great care has been taken over them. There are some lapses: the colony Augusta Raurorum, which is specially featured on page 132, ought to appear on the map of colonies on pages 72-73. Those of Britain and Hadrian's Wall are deficient in several details. On the latter Pons Aelius (Newcastle-upon-Tyne) is a wall-fort on the north side of the Tyne; the outpost forts Bewcastle and Birrens, and the continuation of the wall garrison system down the Cumberland coast, are all omitted. Later in the volume the provincial boundaries in Britain (page 172) are incorrect since Chester is known to have been in Britannia Superior and not Inferior.

The pictures are a blend of old favourites and new discoveries. Among the former the purist may plead some relief from the well-known view of Hadrian's Wall on the crag west of Housesteads, not least because much of which is visible may be nineteenth-century rebuilding. The picture of Corinth (page 51) is surely intended to show the great citadel of the Acrocorinth towering in the background though the caption is preoccupied with the miserable remains of the Roman theatre. It is good to have an excellent aerial view of the Herodian (page 163), the extraordinary hill-top palace built by Herod, and hidden from sight by an artificial mound. Alongside this one could have expected in the section on Masada something on the Roman siege-camps, one of which is clearly visible in the accompanying aerial view. Among the drawings there is a fine reconstruction of the remarkable multiple watermills at Barbegal near Arles, which could produce flour sufficient to feed 80,000. That they were working when the city was an imperial capital seems a clear pointer to where most of the output was

destined. A reconstruction of the recently excavated late Republican villa in Etruria at Settefinestre (page 69) is welcome, and most recent excavations have now revealed a granary and a pig-rearing unit as elements in the original first-century complex. Finally it is unfortunate that there is an error in the reproduction of Professor Mann's table of legionary deployment (page 79), where Dacia has been left out of the list of provinces and its second-century legionary garrison (legion XIII Gemina) is wrongly assigned to Dalmatia.

At the centre of the volume the narration is interrupted and individual provinces are given individual treatment with maps and pictures. Overall one might have hoped for more on the frontier regions and the society and economy which grew up in them, including the peoples who bordered on the Empire. Tombstones and sculpture could have been better employed to reveal local cultures and traditions, which make up the provincial identities clearly discernible in the Roman world. What is really disappointing (especially after Cornell on Italy in the first section) is that one province appears to be little different from the next when the medium is large colour pictures of ruins, arenas, bridges, aqueducts and the like. The last item of all in the volume (before the excellent indexes and bibliography) is a cartoon in which Asterix, standing before a huge bridge in course of construction, complains that Roman building projects are defacing the landscape. Perhaps it might have been worth recalling how the citizens of Ephesus were once reprimanded by the emperor Antoninus Pius for showing no appreciation of the huge building projects being foisted upon them by a rich and ambitious fellow citizen, preferring instead shops and subsidized food. The emperor would have found much to please him in the portrayal of his empire in this atlas.

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Come rain and shine

Oliver M. Ashford

RALPH HARDY, PETER WRIGHT, JOHN GRIBBIN and JOHN KINGDON

The Weather Book
224pp. Michael Joseph. £12.95.
0 7181 2047 7

ROBIN STIRLING

The Weather of Britain
270pp. Faber. £12.50.
0 571 11695 7

There are so many weather books on the market that it cannot be easy for a potential reader to find a new and possibly better way of presenting material already published. Yet the authors of these two books have attempted - and to a large extent succeeded - in doing so.

The Weather Book stands out from other popular accounts of the weather in the variety and quality of the illustrations. On every page are colour photographs of phenomena, such as clouds, rainbows and lightning, the effects of weather, or the landscapes associated with different types of climate. There are reproductions of meteorological paintings and drawings, diagrams to explain what makes the weather, and portraits of some of the scientists who have played a prominent role in this history of the subject. All this fully justifies the claim that the book is a "complete

illustrated guide to meteorological phenomena, weather forecasting and climate".

Of the five sections, the most readable is "The Changing Climate" by John Gribbin. But the uninitiated reader should take care not to accept all the author's views as being representative of the majority of scientists working in this field - a point of fact is occasionally needed. The following section on "Forecasting" also makes interesting reading, especially the account of the historical development of meteorology; in our present era of scientific weather forecasting it is fascinating to be reminded that until recently weather forecasts based on the position of the planets, ie, on astrometeorology, enjoyed great popularity.

The less successful parts of the book are the three earlier sections on "What makes Weather", "Natural Phenomena" and "World Weather". Here, there are too many inconsistencies and repetitions, inadequate explanations of technical expressions, and a surprising number of elementary mistakes - for example in converting temperature differences from Centigrade to Fahrenheit. For the most part, however, which is surely marred - I suggest a thorough check by a competent scientific editor and the introduction of some cross-references. The book could then be recommended very highly to people of all ages who are interested in the weather.

The Weather of Britain will appeal especially to those who revel in facts

about the vagaries of the weather in this country; the first four chapters provide some scientific background (the moderating influence on our climate of the sea, the origin and characteristics of the various air masses that affect us, the structure of a typical depression, etc) but the author only really gets into his stride when he starts talking about the weather months, the rainiest days, the frequency of thunderstorms and so on. Weather enthusiasts who have a rain gauge or thermometer in their back garden and like to compare their records with those from other parts of the country will appreciate the multitude of detail, such as the 30 cm (12 in) of snow which blocked roads at Deal in February 1969, the record 31°C (88°F) at Glasgow in August 1968 and the wind gust of 21.5 mph (34 mph) at Lowther Hill in January 1976. The book is remarkably up to date; published in May 1982, it contains an account of the cold spell of last January. There is a useful index and a map showing the location of all the places mentioned. But it is by no means free from errors and misprints; some of the maps are wrongly labelled and from one table it appears that Durham has more miles than Lerwick. The unwise reader might be misled into believing that mirages necessarily provide evidence of convection and that good conductors of heat are better radiators than poor conductors. But these are relatively minor blemishes, although a glossary of technical terms would make a useful addition.

Several so-called atlases of the Greek and Roman world have been published in the past twenty years, produced by distinguished scholars, such as that judged by its title alone to be the *Atlas of the Greek and Roman World in Antiquity*, edited by Nicholas Hammond, might appear superfluous. This, however, unlike the earlier works, is a topographical atlas, not an atlas in the extended use of the word as designating a lavishly illustrated general history. It is a scholarly work designed to show the location of 10,000 sites, and to reveal, by means of contoured maps the geographical and geological configurations which underlie the life and history of the ancient Classical world. Professor Hammond is the ideal editor, for his experience in editing *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* has given him a broad outlook on the Ancient World, while his books on Epirus and Macedonia themselves emphasize the connections between geography and history.

The *Atlas* contains more than forty maps, some with further detailed insets, such as the one on the map of Sicily showing the defences of Syracuse. Approximately half the maps are of the Greek world, including the Neolithic and Bronze Ages, while the rest illustrate the Roman world, which inevitably means that the Greek period is illustrated in more detail than the Roman. Thus there are maps of the battles of Marathon and Salamis, but none of Roman battles. The cartography is the work of David Cox, and it is clear and elegant as the limitations of the monochrome format allow. The re-

striction to monochrome, which was obviously a necessary economy, gives this otherwise handsomely produced book a sombre appearance, but it does not obscure the detail on the contoured maps. It does, however, occasionally lead to some confusion on other maps; for example the territories of the Hellenistic kingdoms are not very well differentiated. The information conveyed in the maps has been compiled by scholars who are experts on particular areas or subjects; thus Hammond himself is responsible for several of the Greek maps, while A. L. F. Rivet has compiled the maps of Britain and Gaul, and J. J. Wilkes that of the Balkans. In all thirty-five scholars have made contributions. The *Atlas* is not confined to purely topographical maps. There are maps illustrating succeeding phases of Greek history, such as the spread of Mycenaean civilization, the great migrations, and the extent of the Athenian Empire. In the Roman section, there are, for example, maps showing the advance of Christianity, and the trade routes. This latter, however, seems rather sparse and lacking in detail; for example, it has no indication of the Eastern Provinces might also have included more information: some well-attested sites and roads are omitted. And since this *Atlas* is obviously a valuable work of reference for the specialist, it would have been helpful if a few more of the maps had included dates in their titles.

Lucan's *Civil War VIII* (197pp. Arts and Philosophy, Teddington House, Weybridge, Surrey BA12 8PQ. £12.00/£7.95). Includes an introduction and lengthy commentary by R. Mayer and a parallel-text translation by J. D. Duff which originally appeared in the Loeb Classical Library series. The theme of the poem - which is popularly known as *Pharsalia* - is the civil war between Caesar and Pompey which began in 49 BC and ended at Munda in 48 BC.

The globe writ small

Craig Brown

HENRY ROOT:

Henry Root's World of Knowledge
192pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
£6.50.
0 297 78097 2

Encyclopedias tend to fall into two categories. They are either strictly informative, supplying the reader with facts and figures about people and places, or they are philanthropic, encouraging the reader to take up an interest in the body, or needlework, or European cookery. Henry Root's *World of Knowledge* combines the two, providing a unique and helpful voice on what is perhaps the broadest range of topics ever brought together in one book.

Among a sparklingly informed panel of contributors is A. J. P. Taylor, and it is obvious from Root's personal comments on him that his accessibility and erudition have proved to be an inspiration in the compilation of the book. "He says he used to compose his famous BBC lectures in a taxi on the way to the studio", writes Root in A. J. P. Taylor's individual entry, "and there seems no obvious reason to disbelieve him." Underneath a photograph of Taylor runs the caption, "This most unassuming of scholars has turned common sense into an academic discipline." This caption

might provide an epitaph for *The World of Knowledge* itself. Root has realized that to communicate with the largest number of people it is necessary to inform, not just through plain fact, but also through illustration, humour and, occasionally, frank opinion as well. "I shall consider my job well done", he writes in his introduction, "if in the future a member of a common family, stuck for an argument while in a fireside discussion of some grey area or political minefield, says: 'Let us take Root from the shelf and see what he has to say about this difficult issue'."

With this worthy aim in mind, Root has assembled his magnificent team of experts - both Barry and Edward Norman contribute, as do both Paul and Samuel Johnson - and with their help he has sketched the whole world in miniature. In the space of one page you will find Dante, Alighieri; Darwin, Charles; David, Elizabeth; Davies, Dickie; Davis, Fred; Davis, Steve; Day, Day; At The End of The Days; In Those Days; These Days; Deities, Antique; Dean, James; Death, Debates; Debussy, Claude; Debut, and Decency. Common. With an uncanny instinct for the needs of the common family, Root varies the tone and perspective of each entry, feeling no need for the length to be dictated by conventional ideas of importance. Thus Decency, Common is three times as long as Death. This is no criticism of Death: it is wide-ranging and pithy, beginning with the

observation that it is "The last great joke played on us by life. The mistake we make is to sweep it under the carpet", following with a brief but telling quotation from Christopher Booker, and concluding with an overview. "Death is no respecter of persons. It doesn't distinguish between race and religion, colour and creed. See Indians, The Pueblo."

For many entries, Root believes that the pertinent anecdote will suffice: "It is not generally known that Dickie Davies has got an 'A' level in The History of Art." From time to time, a value-judgment is allowed to slip in, but only after much consideration, as in: "Quite the nicest thing about Elizabeth David's new cookery book is that it's so intensely personal" or in "Quite the nicest thing about Arabella Boxer's new cookery book is that it's so intensely personal." At other times, he will give the feel of a word, rather than a cold definition: "Day: 'It's been such a wonderful day, Susan. Don't spoil it'."

Of course, like all dictionary compilers, including Dr Johnson ("He was never so readable as when in conversation with his friend Boswell"), Henry Root has firm preferences in literature. He particularly admires writers of the old school who are still active in contemporary journalism, and he enjoys quoting them, often with some accuracy, in his definitions. "Only the owl", he informs us in his introduction, "heir selves to check each other and reference. I am a busy man." To most of these writers, he also awards a personal entry. "Marshall, Arthur (b. 1910): Philip Howard writes: 'My merry Nestor with a twinkle in his eye'. The Queen Mum of Journalism is 'Howard, Philip (b. 1945): The merry Mercury of the book pages. The thinking man's Geoffrey Wheatcroft. 'Smith, Godfrey (b. 1928): Philip Howard writes: 'Our Jack Falstaff of the Sunday Supplements'."

When Root admires an artist or thinker, he will say so: "Moore, Henry (b. 1898): What he doesn't put into his sculptures is as significant as what he does." "Norman, Dr Edward (b. 1930): The thinking man's Malcolm Muggeridge. In his inimitable Radio 4 lecture of 1978 he correctly argued that since the Church's proper province was the 'heraldic' and the unintelligible it should not concern itself with ethical problems arising from the whole range of human misery on earth - disease, starvation, bigotry, intolerance, torture, death and despair. Yet he is an approachable man who keeps a very decent bottle of sherry in his rooms at Cambridge and likes to laugh."

Perhaps having both William Blake and Benay Green on his panel of contributors has inspired what can only be described as Root's global vision; though no great admirer of E. M. Forster ("That he was a homosexual who spent most of his life at King's College, Cambridge, will occasion little surprise to those who remember that he once recommended loyalty to one's friends above loyalty to one's country"), Root does follow his advice to "only connect", often supplying the same definition for a great many different people. For instance, "It is too easily over-looked, perhaps, that she is an accomplished comedy actress in her own right" is applied to Brigitte Bardot, Claudia Cardinale, Bo Derek, Mariel Dietrich, Diana Dore, Brit Eklund, Farrah Fawcett and Sophia Loren; thus connecting these isolated figures to a central theme or aspiration. The same cross-referencing serves rich men ("Happiness eluded him", glamorous women ("She used to be a nun, you know"), left-wingers ("He gets his orders straight from Moscow"), film-makers ("In any list of the ten greatest films of all time, at least two by X would have to be included"), and many others.

Sumptuously illustrated, with twenty-eight line drawings, ninety photographs and one map of Europe, Henry Root's *World of Knowledge* represents a new departure in home education. It is a joy to handle and a triumph for common sense.

Dramatis personae

Sophie Cooper

IAN HERBERT (Editor):

Who's Who in the Theatre: 17th Edition
Volume 1: Biographies
749pp. 0 8103 0235 7
Volume 2: Playbills
278pp. 0 8103 0236 5
Gale Research Company. \$140 the set.

The British have inherited more and better reference books than they can use. Our clergy have been minutely catalogued and I wonder how often the pages of a volume which I found recently on families of Scottish descent who have emigrated to America are eagerly turned. At the same time basic works are threatened. Dreadful rumours and vulgar books come from Debreit. Now the seventeenth edition of *Who's Who in the Theatre* has appeared, bigger and brighter than ever before but tottering visibly, like a musical that has been in desperate trouble on the road but finally made it to Broadway. The cover is red, black, orange, blue and yellow. There are two volumes for the first time in a larger format. My 1972 edition cost £10; this pair costs \$140 and there's the rub. Not that the price has been multiplied by seven but that it is in dollars: Broadway may be the furthest East it is going to get. There is no British publisher yet though the date is 1981. Copies have to be obtained from *London Theatre Record* where the editor, Ian Herbert, appears to be handling marketing himself, while soldiering on with an inadequate team for edition eighteen.

There are imperfections, but first let it be clear that this work and its continuation are essential, not so much for contemporaries, who could find their names in the *Who's Who*, as for those a generation hence when it will have become impossibly obscure. The first edition in 1912 included a continental section and prominent theatrical families trees. It flourished and reappeared roughly every two or three years before the war, during which there was an interval, and in 1930 (inactive names were out for the first time and in 1933 film "activities" were excluded but kept in a supporting role. All is still strictly legitimate. Robert Redford for example is not included, James Mason has been removed only because he appeared, albeit briefly, on Broadway in 1979 and Jane Fonda may consider herself lucky to be hanging on with only an anti-war revue on the boards since 1963. Ballet dancers were promised their own book and lived off it in 1961; though it never materialized, they have not been allowed to re-enter. The loss of seating plans causes me no dismay either and the cropping of continental names is realistic. The subject is the theatre of London and New York with a glance

at the Stratfords of Avon and Ontario.

Volume One really is a *Who's Who*. The fun of checking who's in, who's out is dampened by an admission of something very like defeat in the preface. An editorial board of distinguished old buffers (surely young agents and producers would be better informed?) made up a list of a thousand new names. Questionnaires were sent out but only three hundred are included. About 2,200 live people, mostly actors, do appear. The core of the whole work is the complete, dated list of all the parts they have played. You can find out if Gielgud ever played Macbeth in *The Beggar's Opera* (yes, in 1940 when Redgrave was ill), whatever became of John Neville (he went to Nova Scotia where he played Othello in 1978), how Ginger Rogers got her start (by winning a Chastelton competition in Texas) and more obscure facts about less well-known players. Usually age is revealed, which is interesting, and the names of parents and spouses and places of birth and education, which tend to be less so. My theory that the key figures of the Royal Court were all born in India is not entirely borne out; I have only found Anthony Page and Lindsay Anderson so far. There is also a list of those who have been dropped, with an asterisk against those who are believed to be dead.

Volume Two is in no way a *Who's Who*. It consists mainly of playbills for 1976-79 with an index, so that it is possible to discover if a play was put on in those years, where it was staged and who gets a credit. There is no way of telling if it was a success, unless it managed to survive into the all-time long runs. These are listed in alphabetical order so it would take a considerable time to discover the runner-up to *The Mousetrap*, unless you were content that you knew all the contenders. *The Fantasticks*, a whimsical little musical that failed here, had been on in New York for twenty years in 1980, but I think it has come off since. That is the great difficulty with any work of this kind. The whole book is two years out of date already ageing daily. Seven Hamlets are listed but not Michael Pennington, Frank Grimes or Jonathan Pryce, none of whom has an entry. The most frequently produced plays were *The Cherry Orchard*, *Artifice*, *Happy Days* and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (another one coming out from the National), with four each. With no clue as to how each was received or how long it ran, it is hard to say if there was a glut. If you know something already, Volume Two is a good place to check it; if you are interested and browsing, you will enjoy yourself; if you want to discover some specific fact, you may be thwarted and have to console yourself with the reminder that this is the best book on the facts of the English-speaking theatre that exists here - in so far and so long as it does.

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Liking thyself

Mary Warnock

MIRIAM STOPPARD:
Everywoman's Life-Guide
447pp. Macdonald. £9.95.
0 336 08588 0

At first sight, there are two things against Miriam Stoppard's big book. The first is probably not her fault. We are told in the blurb that being and staying healthy, for a woman, means "being able to cope". Now for my generation, the word "cope" was itself a horror word. "I expect Nanny will cope," my first friends said when I begged that, just for one morning, they might look after one of my children for me. "You're so wonderful," others said. "I never know how you cope." It was coping that defeated us. It was a constant pre-occupation. It is depressing to hear that, twenty years later, our counterparts are still trying to cope.

But I doubt whether Miriam Stoppard herself would have chosen this depressing expression, so suggestive of a world without love, certainly without pleasure. She is altogether too jolly and confident.

The second objection against the book is that it is too like a jumbo colour supplement, especially designed for women. It is true, but with just the right mix of letter-press, diagrams and really rather beautiful photographs, though, happily, in black and white.

All the same it is a good book; and certainly one that will be widely read. Anyone with daughters who can read will do well to buy it and leave it lying about. Children will do themselves nothing but good if they sneak up to it while their parents are out and read the bits about sex and gaze at the photographs. And the reason why girls, especially, will do themselves good is because the whole emphasis of the book is on confidence and self-esteem, at whatever age you are. The message is "Like thyself".

In some ways it is easier to like yourself than to know yourself: you

don't need paroxysms of sincerity to achieve it; indeed undue honesty may be thought a hindrance. Nevertheless it is, as Miriam Stoppard well knows, of the utmost importance, if you are to live an enjoyable life, to be on good terms with yourself, and to be quite pleased with what you see when you look in the mirror in the mornings. It is the mixture of everyday advice about health and good looks with unprofound but sensible psychological encouragement that makes this book a comfort to read.

To the analytic it may appear that Miriam Stoppard has an unresolved and ambiguous attitude to some areas of her subject-matter. On the key subject of femininity itself, she admits her problem. She finds that she cannot reconcile the intellectual appreciation of the equality of men and women, her awareness of the powerful forces of social conditioning on girls, with her feeling that she wants to be as she has been brought up to be. This honesty about her own attitudes is a particularly endearing aspect of the book. When approaching the section on sexual behaviour she admits to extreme difficulty amounting to distaste, in writing about sexual "techniques", because in real life that isn't what sex is like at all. When writing about the working mother, she lapses shamelessly into an autobiographical account of her own feelings of guilt about her children. But personal confession increases the universal appeal of what she says. We are drawn into a kind of sympathy quite absent when we read more didactic, quasi-scientific works.

But the ambiguity leads her to one serious failure. She never really discusses the nature of non-marital sexual relations. In talking about sex, she is careful always to refer to the "partner", not the "husband". She runs through possible choices in life, including the choice not to get married, or to be a lesbian, and also discusses different methods of contraception. But she never really tackles the historical issue of the difference that the pill has made to the way that women live. This is partly because she is cautious about the

pill, giving equal weight to other forms of contraception. Though this may be medically admirable, it underplays the sociological significance of the new attitude to contraception. Before the pill people had to go to great lengths to find out where there was a Marie Stopes Clinic; and once there, they were often asked when they intended to get married. It is different today.

Another failure is that the book is not explicit about the emotional horrors that can accompany marriage. Miriam Stoppard of course admits that marriages break down, and she gives the familiar statistics. But she does not discuss the rage or positive hatred that may precede the breakdown of a marriage, or indeed continue with it; and this is its lack, a quiet serious omission. It is no good being honest and frank and confidence-boosting about women's sexuality unless you are equally supportive about their frequent bad feelings, resentment and anger. (Of course men feel the same things, but that is not her problem.)

Mrs Stoppard is first and foremost a doctor; and if she is not all that subtle on the emotions, she is especially excellent, as a former practising dermatologist, on all matters related to the skin. She is scathing about the alleged virtues of face-packs, and the cosmetic manufacturers' claims for deep-cleansing and other mysterious powers. She explains how harmful exposure to the sun, and excessive soap and water, are to the skin, and how various diets may affect it. But with all this realism and knowledge, she is greatly in favour of make-up (and particularly for those suffering from spots). Not only is all this comforting (it also carries weight. At this point we believe her, because she speaks as a professional).

In some respects Miriam Stoppard is the Marie Stopes of our time. For, like Marie Stopes, she has her romantic side. Sex, love are, rightly, confounded. But in her case, we are convinced that this arises from theory, but straight from experience. And therefore her book, half encyclopaedia, half autobiography, is a nice encouraging read.

nization (pinyin) for Chinese terms and names. More importantly, most sections of the book now have reasonably detailed historical introductions which help to relate modern developments to China's past. The need for this historical perspective has become even more necessary in recent years, since the increasing flow of information from China has revealed the extent to which traditional values and practices persist in revolutionary China.

The major shifts in economic strategy and political attitudes following the death of Mao Zedong in 1976 inevitably required from the leadership a total rejection of the previous, so-called radical policies. They also led in due course to a fundamental review of national prospects and a sober identification of the problems facing a vast country whose population constitutes one quarter of mankind. This new edition of the encyclopaedia, which covers events up to 1981, gives a thorough account of the impact of these changes on all aspects of Chinese life. The dust-jacket refers to "China's bold new opening to the West" and "the new wave of excitement about China", but the book's treatment of developments in the last two years quite properly gives a more thoughtful and restrained view of the present situation. There are obvious amendments and shifts in emphasis if the content is compared with previous editions: the picture of Chairman Mao's Quotations is confidently displayed in the 1979 edition has disappeared; two new, but not insignificant, names have entered the list of prominent figures in the form of Party Chairman Hu Yaobang and Premier Zhao Ziyang; and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, in line with current thinking, has been

assigned to its unhappy place in Chinese history; many critical issues, such as population control, economic planning and implementation, unemployment, the expansion of the private sector of the economy, the role of higher education, and functioning of the new legal system, and defence strategy, are now introduced for the first time or analysed in greater depth.

The editors have tried to present a dispassionate view of events in China and they claim to have deliberately avoided "judgements of the overall worth of validity of the (political) system". There are, however, degrees of detachment and, in this respect, the present edition will represent an advance in the eyes of many readers. The general tone of comment can now be described as positively critical and it replaces what has previously been a somewhat uncritical approach where occasionally feelings of goodwill and friendship seemed to detract from understanding.

One topic which appears to receive relatively little attention is the question of Chinese social attitudes. This omission is surprising in view of the importance of an understanding of these attitudes for those wishing to deal with Chinese people, particularly in a business context. There are virtually no mentions of the obligations, and hierarchical structure of Chinese society. No reference, for instance, is made to "face" or the tricky area of honour, which can often lead the unwary foreigner into difficulties. However, this is a minor criticism of what is otherwise the most comprehensive and reliable guide to contemporary China available now to Western readers.

Healing thyself

J. F. Watkins

TONY SMITH (Editor):
The Macmillan Guide to Family Health
832pp. Macmillan. £14.95.
0 333 28780 4

The great moments in a reviewer's life come when he is called upon to review the almost unreviewable. It is then that the task becomes a challenge comparable to cycling up the North Face of the Elger. Unreviewable in question is the only one, or the best, of its kind. How can one review the Bible, or the Manual of Infirmary Training, or the London Telephone Directory, for example?

The Macmillan Guide to Family Health is unquestionably the best manual of body maintenance and repair that has ever been produced. It weighs 4 lbs 10 oz, measures 9½ x 7½ x 2¼ inches, and contains 832 pages. It was composed by twenty-seven doctors, two science writers, and an editorial team of sixteen, led by the Medical Correspondent of the Times, and their names are all given in the list of credits. It has four sections. Part I deals with the Healthy Body and how to keep it healthy. Part II deals with self-diagnosis, mainly in a series of splendid flow diagrams which guide the sufferer, or the delighted hypochondriac, to a preliminary diagnosis. Thus, if you have painful ankles your answers may lead you to a diagnosis of sprain, or fracture, or gout, and so on. These charts solve the old problem met by everyone who loves to browse in books with titles like Home Doctor, namely, how to avoid the awful conviction that one is suffering simultaneously from at least four kinds of cancer, and several deadly infectious diseases.

This state of mind will, on the other hand, be brought on by Part III, which describes in plain language diseases, disorders, and other problems, classified by the system involved and also alphabetically. It is for the effects of reading this section that the flow charts provide an immediate antidote. Part IV gives practical advice on caring for the sick. Every page has excellent, clear illustrations, which, like the text, are totally accurate. They are even more sound, since some of the patients are given dark faces. There is one slightly worrying illustration, however, to which it is my painful duty to draw attention. On page 606 there is a drawing of sexual intercourse occurring "between a man and a woman", as the text puts it. Neither party to the transaction seems to be showing much enjoyment, but that is not the point. At £15 a time private ownership of this book will be confined to members of the upper middle class, the landed aristocracy and reviewers, who have to consider constantly the moral welfare of their servants and children. They will have to decide whether to tear out the

page in question before placing the volume on the coffee-table in the lounge.

What is the place of this compilation in Contemporary European Thought? As part of the library of a great house, or in the reference section of the local Carnegie Library the book will be of great use to the family. Does the butler suffer from hallucinations? Turn to Chart 2, question 1: "Have you noticed one or more of the following symptoms... generalised confusion... agitated behaviour... signs of physical illness?" If the answer is yes, the instruction is "Call your doctor now! This may be delirium. See Chart 15 (Confusion)". Many of us occasionally twitch and tremble. Chart 13 can reassure us that we may be afflicted by nothing worse than mild caffeine poisoning and need no more drastic remedy than a few hours without tea or coffee. Difficultly in breathing? Chart 41 will enable us to distinguish readily between Anxiety and Pneumococcal pneumonia. Chart 65 leads us unerringly through eleven causes of Painful Leg and, like all the charts, directs us to the doctor if we cannot make a diagnosis. Just as the principal function of a general practitioner is to tell his patients what they are not suffering from, so these charts will help to allay much needless anxiety, and now and again may save a life. They make the book essential to Master Mariners sailing without a ship's surgeon.

Novelists and playwrights will find Part III the most useful section. There are few things which cause more annoyance to members of the medical profession than inaccuracy in the descriptions of the diseases which writers inflict upon their characters. Dickens was a serious offender in this respect. The death of Little Nell, for example, appears to have been caused by some rare tropical disease, like Lassa Fever, which is an epidemiological absurdity before the invention of the aeroplane. Other writers are also guilty. If Job had been as severely smitten with boils as his biographer claims he would almost certainly have died of septicaemia. King Lear's temporary (and understandable) hysterical psychosis should not have resulted in his death. He may, however, have died quite unnecessarily, of superimposed hypothermia. In the world of opera, any doctor could have told Puccini that a woman dying of tuberculosis could not sing loudly enough to be heard even in the first row of the stalls. From now on we shall be spared these solecisms if only creative writers will take the trouble to look up the facts. A spy, for example, could be captured because of an attack of tenosynovitis which prevents him from pulling the trigger of his revolver. A great violinist could be put temporarily out of action by a frozen shoulder, and so on.

This book, in short, is for everyone. It will continue to give pleasure, instruction, and reassurance as the centuries unroll.

Other reference books recently published include:

The Natural History of the Mediterranean by Teym. Harris. 244pp. Pelham Books. £7.95. 0 7207 1391 9

The Anagram Dictionary by Michael Curt. 248pp. Robert Hale. £7.95. 0 7091 9674 1

The Dictionary of Anagrams by Samuel C. Hunter. 266pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £6.95. 0 7100 9006 4

The Price Guide to Antique Silver by Peter Waldron. 362pp. Antique Collectors' Club. £19.50. 0 907462 08 1

The Europe Year Book 1982: A World Survey. Volume I. International Organizations, Europe, Afghanistan to Z. 790pp. 0 905118 71 5. Volume II. Countries outside Europe from Cameroon to Zimbabwe. 1,888pp. 0 905118 72 9. Europa Publications. £80 the set.

The Illustrated Guide to Marina Life by Werner de Haas and Freddy Koenig. 350pp. Harold Starks. £8.95. 0 287 00056 6

The Illustrated Guide to Molluscs by Horst Janz. 180pp. Harold Starks. £7.45. 0 287 00055 8

National Parks and Reserves of Western Europe by Eric Duffey. 288pp. Macdonald. £14.95. 0 356 08586 4

The Book of Political Quotes by Jonathan Green. 246pp. Angus and Robertson. Paperback. £5.95. 0 207 14569 5

Dictionary of Trade Name Origins by Adrian Room. 217pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £7.95. 0 7100 0839 2

The Book of Whales by Richard Ellis. 202pp. Robert Hale. £14.95. 0 7091 9761 6

World View 1982: An Economic and Geographical Yearbook. 312pp. Photo. Paperback. £5.95. 0 86104 367 7

LITERARY CRITICISM

MARILYN FRENCH:
Shakespeare's Division of Experience
376pp. Cape. £12.50.
0 224 02013 7

SMOON SHEPHERD:
Amazon and Warrior Women:
Varieties of Feminism in
Seventeenth-Century Drama
234pp. Brighton: Harvester. £22.50.
0 85527 353 4

IRENE G. DASH:
Woeing, Wedding, and Power:
Women in Shakespeare's Plays
265pp. Columbia University Press. \$9.25.
0 231 05238 3

PATRICIA MONAGHAN:
Women in Myth and Legend
318pp. Junction Books. £12.50.
(paperback, £5.95).
0 86245 050 0

The value of any work of literary criticism depends not on its theoretical position but on the talent and perceptiveness of its author. This truth is reasserted afresh by a comparison of these four works of feminist criticism, which resemble each other in approach and overlap in subject-matter. One is brilliant, one is brilliant but suggestive, and two are more or less worthless. The outstanding book is *Shakespeare's Division of Experience* by Marilyn French. It seems to me the finest piece of feminist criticism we have yet had. Its central argument is that Shakespeare offers us a threefold division of experience, first into masculine and feminine, and then, by a subdivision of the latter, into "inlaw" and "outlaw" feminine. The masculine principle, "predicated on the ability to kill, is the role of power-in-the-world. It is associated with prowess and ownership, with physical courage, assertiveness, authority, independence and the right, rights, legitimacy." It erects permanent structures, it values action over feeling, thought over sensation. The outlaw feminine is associated with "darkness, chaos, flesh, the sinister, magic, and above all sexuality." "Measure of all sorts", claims French, "but especially sexual pleasure, is a threat to the masculine principle." The inlaw feminine is founded on the ability to give birth, and includes "nurturiveness, compassion, mercy, and the ability to create... It exalts the community above the individual, feeling over action, sensation over thought. It expresses the benevolent aspects of nature, and the prime example of it is the chaste and constant heroine.

French's view of Shakespeare's development is that he begins by accepting legitimacy, and so the masculine principle; in his middle comedies he devotes more attention to constancy, and so to the inlaw feminine. The outlaw feminine is savage, rejected, a rejection seen in the sexual disgust of the problem plays (which, she rather surprisingly claims, is continued to the end of his career). Only in *Antony and Cleopatra* is the outlaw feminine treated with sympathy. Although Shakespeare realized that the threats to harmonious life could come from either pole, his deepest horror was aroused only by uncontrolled nature - sex, corruption, the transient and the unflexible. His questioning of legitimacy, and so of the uncontrolled masculine principle, is intellectual and restrained compared with his horrified rejection of the outlaw female.

Not until virtually the last page of her book does French tell us (the day is highly effective rhetorically) that her concern is not merely with Shakespeare, that she believes the investigation of moral qualities with genders impoverishes and endangers our society, that her wish is that every human experience should be related, and in particular that whereas for Shakespeare the greatest threat may have lain in nature, it may lie in control: she therefore condemns "an animus against the

almost total dedication to masculine values that characterizes our culture."

Within this structure, French has elaborated some subtle and profound insights. The quality of scholarship is high (and the discussion of other critics, though thorough, conveniently left in the notes), and on almost every play she has something illuminating to say. She is much better on the tragedies than on the comedies, if only because she is clearly more interested in them, and treats them at greater length. The sections on *Lear*, *Macbeth* and *Antony* are especially rich. On *Lear* she points out that the way the concept "nature" is used characterizes the user (a useful reversal of the usual point), and shows how the play is concerned with the dangers of the unregulated masculine principle, and with the more intensely horrifying danger of women who attempt to exercise masculine power, and who, because they violate the feminine must be accused of unregulated sexuality. On *Antony* her interpretation is fairly orthodox (very hostile to Caesar), deals judiciously with the relation of the play's values to moral principles, and very shrewdly points out that in Cleopatra Shakespeare shows a sympathy for unlawful feminine sexuality that he shows nowhere else, whereas in Octavia he judges a feminine ideal that he had earlier accepted without question. *Macbeth* is perhaps better suited than any other play to her approach, since its value scheme is quite explicitly concerned with gender differences (hence the harping on manliness). Since in it, Scotland's hero-culture is based on killing, the difference between legitimate and illegitimate killing is crucial, and this difference seems in fact to be much less perceptible than the moral scheme based on legitimacy would claim. *Macbeth* should not therefore be seen as a tragedy of ambition (aspiring to the illegitimate), but as a play about the relation between manliness and feeling. The orthodox interpretation is too glibly dismissed, but that which is substituted for it is richly suggestive.

I have some central objections to raise against the general thesis of *Shakespeare's Plays* offers some unexpected interpretations of Shakespeare's use of the outlaw feminine, but the outlaw feminine seems to torture the evidence. How far does the term "feminine" refer to women, "masculine" to men? The answer must be, not totally but largely. Not totally, for there would be no need to distinguish masculine from male: differences of gender are socially as well as biologically determined, and are therefore imaginable apart from the male/female distinction. But unless there is some correlation with this distinction, it is simply confusing to call them differences of gender; and French's main examples of the outlaw female are Falstaff, Don John and Sir Toby Belch (and only a hairsplitting distinction keeps Edmund from joining them). The outlaw feminine principle is referred to as "the pole of sex and pleasure". Can sex and pleasure be associated more with one sex than another? In an obvious sense the answer must be no, since sex by definition requires both; and in the senses in which the question can be answered, the answer is surely, with men. It is men who think and talk about sex all the time, it is men who impose it on an unwilling partner, and it is surely men, in our culture, who get more than their fair share of pleasure. Nothing would be lost and much gained, if French's third principle were referred to simply as the outlaw principle.

One other criticism seems of great importance. I am all for Occam's razor, but one concept we cannot do without in talking of Shakespeare, especially the comedies, is love; and it is virtually never mentioned in the discussions of *As You Like It* and *Much Ado*. What Rosalind is able to express by means of her disguise is not simply "areas of her personality" but the complexity of her love for Orlando; Beatrice's reason for not abandoning the ideal of constancy is not Shakespeare's "timidity" or the

Good and bad genders

Laurence Lerner

limitation of stage conventions, but the fact that she discovers her love for Benedick. Some of French's tortured reasoning about constancy would be simplified if "love" and "sex" were not used as synonyms, or if it were admitted that what Iago hates is sexual love rather than the feminine principle - as it is stated later in the essay. But it is page 214 before a contrast between love and appetite is explicitly admitted.

A different kind of omission is that of literary history. The concentration on Shakespeare is a legitimate (and common enough) strategy for a critic, but it is disappointing that there is so little awareness of the conventions lying behind the plays, and of the parallel activities of his predecessors and contemporaries. The discussion of *As You Like It* would be improved if it paid more attention to the idea of pastoral, that of *Thion* (which is excellent) if it said more on the tradition of the misanthrope. That neither ignorance nor incompetence is responsible for this omission is clear from some pregnant *obiter dicta*, and an admirable page on Sidney and Spenser towards the end.

Simon Shepherd's *Amazon and Warrior Women: Varieties of Feminism in Seventeenth-Century Drama* goes to the other extreme. Its central concern is with dramatic conventions for the presentation of women, and virtually all the plays discussed are minor if not forgotten. This is admitted in the preface, which remarks "texts may be obscure when we have no way of making sense of them." If this is a claim that feminist perspectives may enable us to see new merit in forgotten works, it whets the appetite, but only to disappoint, for the discussions are not really concerned with establishing a new canon, nor, except in passing, with evaluation. There is also the tactical difficulty, that to read discussions of unfamiliar texts (which will be the experience of all but a tiny handful of *Amazon and Warrior Women* readers) is an odd experience. A quivering from the author expository skills and patience that Shepherd lacks. When one adds his occasional fondness for pithy colloquial sentences that often twist away into ambiguity or incoherence, it is clear that this is not an easy book to read. His use of terminology too is sometimes unhelpful, as when he seems to regard "sexuality" as a synonym for "sex-role" or "gender", and thus obscures a valuable distinction; or, unconvincingly, as in the case of "Amazon". He distinguishes Amazons from warrior women, claiming

that the term "comes to indicate a woman who uses her strength for non-virtuous... specifically lustful ends", a fascinating point, if true, yet even in the examples he quotes I counted as many uses that refute it as those that confirm it.

Yet *Amazons and Warrior Women* is lively and suggestive, with - for instance - a perceptive discussion of *Measure for Measure*, and an occasional observation that blends theoretical awareness and social significance, as in the remarks on balcony scenes in romantic drama: "Those scenes place the woman visually before us in a position where she is just outside the household that controls her, and yet above the ground, unable to reach the lover who promises sex, who has come over the garden wall."

The most striking word in Shepherd's title is "feminism". Most of us will be surprised to learn that there was a seventeenth-century feminism, and will wonder what extended or special use is being given to the term. The Introduction is an answer to a critic who asked "why I couldn't substitute for the word and feminist the word misogynist. Much of the book involves the crucial difference between the terms: a hatred for women is something civilized folk can dissociate themselves from; opposition to women's demands for their rights may not be." The cantankerous tone of this is, fortunately, not found in the book itself, but the substance of the point is not confirmed either, for the "feminists" of seventeenth-century drama are not concerned with women's rights in any sense of the term that Millieken Fawcett or Emily Davies would have recognized. The ways in which the female force changes the male world, in many of the plays discussed, is by fulfilling traditional feminine roles. Take, for instance, the virgin martyrs, those victims of male lust and tyranny. (That lust and tyranny are related is, for Shepherd, important, for sex is related to politics; but he does not mention the dramatic convention that tragedies deal with the deeds of princes: the seducer or rapist is often a king because we are being shown a tragedy, not because sexual equals political power - the poor and the oppressed are surely just as capable of lust and rape). Why do the virgin martyrs commit suicide? Shepherd sees it as an affirmation of control over their own bodies. Augustine's view of the Lucretia story, that she should not have killed herself, because all killing is murder, and because the purity of the mind is not lost when the body is compelled, is

dismissed as being a male argument, irrelevant to the world as Lucretia experiences it. It would be truer to regard the insistence on suicide as a male argument: the loss of virtue is a smirching of the female body that damages it as a male property, and the truer feminist position might be to leave the rapist and the indignant husband to have their masculine argument, and make the best of her own situation. Survival is the truly radical course.

Irene G. Dash in *Woeing, Wedding and Power: Women in Shakespeare's Plays* offers some unexpected interpretations of Shakespeare's plays by means of careful retelling of the stories ("We anxiously await Desdemona's entrance...") and by refusing long-lead critics. She is well-informed about abridgments of Shakespeare: the eighteenth-century stage, and goes to enormous lengths to bring this in to her discussions, and to attribute interpretations she rejects to the lingering influences of Garrick and Theobald. She is also free with modern quotations from sociologists and feminists; whose usually worthy views she does not hesitate to attribute to Shakespeare. She is particularly obtuse on *Antony and Cleopatra*, where her determination to defend Cleopatra against all charges of feminine instability or excessive concern with sex leads her to say of the teasing of Antony in the first scene ("Clear the air, my dear, my dear...") that it shows Cleopatra to be "a woman with political as well as personal interests"; and particularly wrong-headed on *Othello*, where she thinks most of the trouble can be attributed to the institution of marriage (Desdemona is a woman who "fails to adjust to marriage", Iago and Emilia illustrate "the imbalanced relationship in a long-standing marriage"). It is a relief, between these two chapters, to read a lively and sensible defence of Paulina as neither shrew nor goddess, but rational and human.

Patricia Monaghan's *Women in Myth and Legend* is arranged like a reference book, but it has no scholarly apparatus whatever. It confuses scholarly and ideological assertion in sentences like "It is now well established that Esther, the Old Testament heroine, was the goddess Ishtar in thin disguise". Its discussion of the Amazons is written with indignation (the story that they tore off their right breasts is "a smear campaign"), and seems to be insisting that they really existed, but without quoting any evidence, or indeed showing much awareness of what the appropriate evidence might be.

Funny business

Lachlan Mackinnon

NEIL SCHAEFFER:
The Art of Laughter
166pp. Guildford: Columbia University Press. £12.60.
0 231 05224 3

The jokes Neil Schaeffer retells fall ominously flat on the page. Perverse, this may help to sustain his thesis. He argues that comedy cannot depend merely upon incongruity, although the incongruous is always important to it, because so can serious poetic metaphor. Rather, what matters is context. The comic is something to which we are already attuned, be it by "there's a joke about..." or by the verbal ingenuities with which *As You Like It* opens, Schaeffer's text, by its nature, cannot offer us such cues.

Schaeffer has more difficulty over jokes in the world; the things and events we laugh at. Here, he argues that it is we who choose the context, supplying the frame nature cannot. He cannot account for our choice of the comic context rather than the tragic, but he does tell us that comedy, like tragedy, is a serious error here.

follow up associations purely for pleasure, and releases us from all responsibility. It is, Schaeffer argues, a sign of man's uniqueness that he can so withdraw from the world. Comedy is not play, which is a rehearsal of the serious/business of life, but a complete disavowal of seriousness.

The example of Lenny Bruce is used to show how comedy deliberately contains and makes ridiculous the problems society must treat as external. Schaeffer says that Bruce's defence of his work as satirical rather than funny was self-defeating, and indicative of society's mistrust of the anarchic place of laughter. The satirist is granted a moral authority and licence which the comedian lacks. In *As You Like It*, Jacques's satire is similarly contained by, and the butt of, the comic universe.

In the chapter on *As You Like It*, Jacques and Touchstone are well treated, but Schaeffer goes on to propose that the real pleasure of the play is our knowledge that Orlando sees through Rosalind's disguise all along, and merely exploits the position to redeem himself from his tongue-tied impotence at their first meeting. How this might be conveyed on stage is described at some length. There is a serious error here.

Schaeffer clearly believes that the hero must be intelligent, lively and witty to deserve Rosalind's love, a view which is patently un-Shakespearean. We need only reflect that, for instance, Helena's love for Bertram in *All's Well* is no whit deceived by the transparent worthlessness of its object to see that desert has nothing to do with love. Love's gratuitousness should not be expelled away by reducing Shakespeare's drama to a sophisticated social drama inherently mistrustful. Schaeffer's quest for comic pleasure leads him too far beyond common sense.

Tristram Shandy gives us the pleasure of the irrational. Schaeffer says, where *As You Like It* gives that of release. The wounds, carefully tabulated, of the Shandy family are redeemed from tragedy by Tristram's manipulation of time. In Tristram's flexible medium, incident and character are released from the time-bound obsessiveness of tragedy to become delightful, funny and lovable. Schaeffer's account is thoughtful and sympathetic; and his theory of comic coding is suggestive, but it cannot adequately explain comedy's value. That would require some other, philosophical or anthropological, account which falls outside Schaeffer's essentially literary brief.

A foretaste of decline

Max Beloff

RICHARD CLARKE:

Anglo-American Economic Collaboration in War and Peace 1942-1949
215pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £12.50.
0 19 828439 X

What one would expect from the title of this curious volume is a thorough examination of the many and important issues of a financial and economic nature in which the British and American governments were concerned from the time of Lend-Lease to that of the Marshall Plan and the creation of what became OECD. One would expect due account to be taken of the material and literature available on both sides of the Atlantic so that one could see how the change in the relative positions of the two countries was mirrored in the thinking of their leaders and in the policy issues to which such reflections gave rise.

What we get in fact is nothing of the kind, but a certain amount of material about some of the issues which will illumine some aspects of them for those already familiar with the story and with access to the other principal sources. The book did not begin in this way, it was legitimately intended as the personal narrative of one of the participants in these transactions, but to our loss the writer of it, Sir Richard Clarke, died with the manuscript incomplete. Nor is it possible to know, even had he lived to complete it, whether he would have published it in anything like its present form. Few memoirs – even by civil servants – are composed of numbered paragraphs as though they were an official brief or minute.

In any event, what we have from the author's hand are four chapters only, each dealing with a single phase in the story: the efforts at matching American and British war production to meet the needs of the Alliance; the problem of how the United States was to lend-lease and its aftermath; the much debated American loan in the autumn of 1945; and finally the financial crisis of 1947 and the antecedents of the Marshall Plan. The editor, Sir Alec Cairncross, a professional economist but one with experience as a civil servant during the same period and later, has added to the text an introduction, misleadingly styled a commentary, which corrects Clarke on one or two points, and gives some perspective to the treatment; he has also added to his own footnote additional ones of his own which point to some of the other sources for studying the question and also, and more important, some selected memoranda of the period, mostly though not exclusively by Clarke himself, which in fact occupy more space than the unfinished memoir. Documents of this kind, showing how government policy was arrived at through the interaction of departments and personalities, are rare in print in relation to financial policy than in respect of the more traditional issues of diplomacy, and they have well excited the determined and knowledgeable student to further historical inquiry and cogitation. Nevertheless this is not a book; neither the one Sir Richard might have written nor the one Sir Alec may yet write.

What can we derive from what we have here? Sir Richard Clarke, Otto Clarke to fellow mandarins, was best known in his later career as an authority on the machinery of government; his willingness to assist those seeking to understand how British government operates is one to which the present reviewer can testify with gratitude. He was an advocate of the creation of "Super-departments" and now that these are out of fashion or in some instances dismantled, his opinions are likely to seem less persuasive than they did. But it is clear that his whole interest in how things were done, as well as in what things were done, was stimulated by the machinery created in Whitehall and mirrored to some extent by Britain's

large-scale representation in wartime Washington – both staffed in large part by men drawn from outside the ranks of the civil service. (The book, which has no index, does have a useful list of *dramatis personae*.) It was also stimulated by what Clarke himself observed in Washington, where the US problems of co-ordination were much greater, where the civilian war effort was never organized on the same scale, and where in matters of production the supremacy of the military did not have to contend with strong civilian direction.

But machinery is only what is needed to tackle matters of substance. On the substantial issues arising in the areas within which he worked, Clarke had some penetrating historical insights, and these in turn were buttressed by an unusual ability to extract major truths from simple statistics – using figures not to numb reason but to propel argument. For the war years there are two such insights of particular relevance. The first was the need to adapt British thinking to the understanding that what had been "our" war was transformed in the latter half of 1941 into a world war, "in which we were a tremendously important unit, but no longer in control of decisions". Indeed in one sense the whole story is one of Britain's declining ability to make decisions of her own and of the rearguard action to try, by reducing commitments and mobilizing what strength we had, to make the decline as painless as possible.

The second major insight was the need in wartime to see beyond victory to the conditions of the post-war

world and to plan for it not inflexibly, since things might change, but at least in the light of probabilities. What Clarke felt was that while the necessities of enlisting popular support for the war effort helped to direct attention to social aspects of post-war planning – Beveridge and all that – far less attention was being devoted to how Britain was going to earn the money to maintain its standard of living, let alone massively improve the lot of the people. Why Britain's share of the world market had been declining even before the war, how British industry could reverse the trend by becoming more export-minded, what room there was for import-substitution, notably in agriculture, – all these questions that have haunted British governments ever since were present to Clarke in the midst of all the turmoil of wartime financial negotiations.

Clarke clearly differed from some of his colleagues and seniors in displaying a certain scepticism on two major aspects of what was the current orthodoxy during and just after the war. He was much more prone to believe that the essentials of the post-war economic problem lay in the need to get production restarted or revived, and that barriers to trade in the form of tariffs and so forth were less important than the actual level of what could be produced and the supplies of food, raw materials and energy to make this productive effort possible. He was therefore less dogmatically committed than some to getting rid of all elements of discrimination in trade and payments. A dollar shortage for most countries would be inevitable for a long time and it was their right to protect

themselves against its effects by commodity action where this was possible.

But one must expect the United States to see things from a different point of view and recognize the internal impediments to the kind of policies of enlightened self-interest to which economic logic might be expected to subscribe. Clarke's point of view was thus less optimistic than that of Keynes (for whom he nevertheless had a deep admiration) and he was more prepared to say that if we could not get financial assistance on terms that we thought would assist us to a permanent recovery, we were not compelled by the lack of any alternative to accept whatever the Americans were prepared to offer. As the narrative and documents make plain there was an alternative scenario which would involve arrangements not only with the countries of the Commonwealth but also with France, Holland, Belgium and their empires. For those who looked at the country's problems from the point of view of its economic burden, it seemed clear that it was overseas commitments, especially military commitments and the cost of "feeding the Germans", that were the main threats to achieving solvency. Yet withdrawal could clearly put in jeopardy the very empires upon whose resources recovery was in part to be based. The issue was not directly faced in any of the material here available, but it is hard to believe that someone as acutely aware of historical realities as Clarke failed to note it. What in retrospect he did feel had happened was that all Britain's ingenuity had gone into propping up the economic status quo and that we might have done better had we not been cushioned against

reality by the American loan on the terms that Keynes accepted.

The crisis of 1947 provided for both the British and the Americans a glimpse of the dangers which the world economy still faced, and led to the new departure of the Marshall Plan, by which the Americans helped Europe to organize itself for its own independence. Although the book and documents end before the foundation of the EEC in the Schuman Plan, one can see foreshadowed the subsequent difficulties between Europe and its American protector, which in one form or another have been with us ever since.

Indeed the most interesting of the documents printed here are the last two. One is an examination by Clarke himself of the arguments for and against a European federation with British participation, leading to the conclusion that this was the wrong route and that it was to combined action between America and the Commonwealth that we should look for our future safety and prosperity. The Americans had to be persuaded not to treat us as mere Europeans. Thus the Clarke of 1948 was looking at things rather differently from the Clarke of 1945. The final document is the minute of a discussion on these matters between the élite of the departments concerned with external policy, which broadly accepted Clarke's new diagnosis as a guide to action. A decade later one of those present, Mr (later Sir) Frank Lee became the spearhead of Whitehall's drive to get Britain into the Common Market. Not even mandarins can claim consistency.

Monetary migrations

Eric Roll

PAUL DAVIDSON:

International Money and The Real World
312pp. Macmillan. £15.
0 333 289 935

Some four years ago, Paul Davidson wrote an interesting and important book, *Money and the Real World*, in which, building on Keynesian foundations, he tried to infuse into monetary theory some recent theoretical advances – particularly in regard to uncertainty. Reviewed at the time that Professor Davidson's study, despite its merits, was limited in both its theoretical and practical significance by dealing with money in a "closed" system. The present book was written to meet this objection and thus to complete an up-to-date, "realistic" analysis of money. Taken together, the two books certainly make a major contribution to a re-statement of monetary theory; but Davidson would be the first to admit that there is still a long way to go.

The present volume starts with an introductory chapter not specifically addressed to international monetary problems: it is entitled "Solving the Crisis in Economic Theory", and specialist readers may already be familiar with it as one contribution to a recently published issue of the journal *Public Interest* containing a symposium on the "Crisis in Economic Theory". Davidson classifies current theories and comes down firmly in favour of what he calls Post-Keynesian Economics (not hyphenated; he is co-editor of a journal with the same title); this covers a wide spectrum of theory, to which only "Monetarist-classical" stands in complete opposition.

Of the remaining fourteen chapters the first four are essentially definitional. They establish the conceptual framework, and extend the definitions of a "closed" economy into the international functions of money and the mechanism of international trade and payments. The next three chapters are ground-clearing ones of international monetary analysis; they make no attempt at prescription)

they relate to international payments and finance and trade in what Davidson calls "non-uniformized" and "uniformized" money. "Non-uniformized" money (NUMS) is when regional and national contracts are denominated in local monetary units, and international ones in other units; "uniformized" money (UMS) when the exchange rate is or is not expected to show substantial variability over the time during which current contracts are still binding. Two further chapters deal with international money and liquidity, and with the stability of the purchasing power of money.

This section fills rather more than half the book and much of it is suitable for specialist rather than general readers. There is a lot of interesting, indeed important material here, particularly as Davidson tries consistently to relate monetary phenomena to actions and events in the "real" economy, with its great variety of contractual obligations embodying expectations of a quantitative character. Though not always easy to follow (one has, inter alia, to

get used to Davidson's penchant for new abbreviations: in addition to NUMS and UMS, there are, for example, GE for general equilibrium, AO and NAO for available and non-available output, and SOS for shortage of savings) these chapters will repay careful study. Above all, they dispose of the broad simplification by which at least some schools of monetarism try to pre-empt what is essentially a complicated and difficult area of economic theory, if only because changes in actual institutions and practices are continually making simple categories inadequate.

The next chapter is virtually a short monograph on the impact of an OPEC cartel on the international monetary standard. Further special studies follow on Euro money, the Role of International Corporations, Gold, and two which are organically linked with the preceding theoretical analysis: on the possibility of fixing wages in terms of an international standard and flexible exchange rates.

The final chapter is on "Coordinating International Payments and

Incomes." Here, in a tantalizingly short six pages, Davidson sketches proposals for a better ordering of the international monetary system. As might be expected from what has gone before, he rejects any extreme laissez-faire attitude based on the hypothesis of a self-correcting general equilibrium mechanism – the monetarist doctrine that maintenance of a particular monetary target is an adequate means for the avoidance of inflation (or excessive deflation) and that, with this secured, international adjustments can be left to the operation of freely floating exchange rates. His proposal is for an "Inter-Governmentally coordinated incomes policy" designed to achieve the maximum degree of sickness in flow-supply prices (and income claims), while reducing the trade deficit. Davidson recognizes that apart from the practical difficulties of such international coordination, it would create a major socio-political problem: how is it to be combined with departures from any existing structure of income distribution which may be thought desirable?

The proposal may be thought visionary at first blush – even though many non-monetary economists are tending to regard some form of incomes policy (whether it is called that or not) as an essential element in domestic stabilization. The practical difficulties are only too well known, and are greatly magnified when transferred to the international arena.

In fact, however, much of what Davidson proposes is actually happening, through spontaneous or induced income changes, exchange and interest-rate movements, the temporary use of tariffs, quotas and exchange restrictions, as well as through bilateral and multilateral loans, overdraft facilities and the operation of international credit and capital markets. The only difference is that Davidson wants these movements to be coordinated, as they might have been had the post-war international economic institutions (largely Keynes's) of post-war been realized. The events of the most recent past do not encourage optimism that the first five careless raptures of the post-war reforms can be recaptured.

John Mole

More voices than one

M. V. Jones

ROBIN FEUER MILLER:

Dostoevsky and "The Idiot". Author, Narrator, and Reader
266pp. Harvard University Press.
0 674 21490 0

ROBERT LOUIS JACKSON:

The Art of Dostoevsky: Deliriums and Nocturnes
380pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £17.60.
0 691 06484 9

Current interest in theories of reading and in narrative structure made it seem inevitable that before long an extended structural analysis of Dostoevsky's *The Idiot* would appear in print. Not long ago we were reading

Bobodanka Vladiv's book on *The Devils* (Narrative Principles in Dostoevsky's "Besy"), itself strongly influenced by the methodological principles of Wolf Schmid's *Der Textaufbau in den Erzählungen Dostoevskys*. Both these important books displayed an impressive theoretical apparatus and were laden with the sort of specialized vocabulary which causes some to rejoice for the future of literary studies and others to despair. But although Robin Feuer Miller is clearly aware of recent developments in critical theory, she is content to consign most of them, respectfully, to an appendix. Acknowledging that some aspects of Schmid's approach resemble her own, she seems to regard this fact as little more than a curiosity. Her own method, whatever criticisms may be levelled against it, turns out to be a modified form of Wayne Booth, and the result is a book which is eminently readable and a study of Dostoevsky's novel which will be generally welcomed.

The various voices of the narrator in *The Idiot* have long presented the attentive reader with apparently insoluble problems. Dr. Miller's

analysis of the four basic modes of narration within the novel is fascinating and more subtle than there is space to indicate here. She discerns the comic voice of the novel of manners, the Gothic voice of arbitrary disclosure and heightened terror, the voice of a sympathetic and omniscient narrator and a voice ironically detached and swayed by current rumours. Using a term given currency by Bakhtin, Dr. Miller sees these voices as evidence of "polyphony": vesting however, that they are carefully orchestrated by a single authorial consciousness. Adopting Booth's distinction between "real author" and "implied author" (with their corresponding "readers"), she adds to the scheme a "fictional narrator" and a "narrator's reader". The growing gap between the "implied author" and the "fictional narrator" as the novel progresses plays, she claims, a major role in Dostoevsky's rhetoric of persuasion.

This thesis turns out to be a convincing one. By the end of Part Two of the novel, the reader has acquired a trust in the fictional narrator; his various voices have matched the subject-matter. But at the same time the reader is aware that the narrator's voice does not coincide exactly with that of the implied author; the narrator's powers of reasoning sometimes seem deficient. The clouds of rumours out of which he occasionally generates his narrative do not always create the impression of an ironic, detached narrator, but rather at times reduce him to the status of a town gossip. His tendency to beg off providing information is often annoying because it is so obviously arbitrary.

In the third and fourth parts the reader's confidence is eventually undermined as he becomes confused by abrupt, unpatterned changes in the narrator's voice, and the narrator even apologizes for the problems inherent in writing novels and seems anxious to bring the fiction to an end. As he appears to lose control over his narrative the narrator also seems to lose sympathy for his hero,

Prince Myshkin. The reader becomes increasingly aware of the gap between fictional narrator and implied author: the narrator's reader goes on reading in a chronological and unreflective fashion, accepting Radomsky's criticisms of the prince and dismissing Myshkin's ravings about atheism and Roman Catholicism, while the implied reader reads more carefully, questioning Radomsky's views as shallow and seeing in the prince's monologue the logical climax of his stated beliefs. "The crucial point, however, is that the actual or real reader of the novel is concurrently both readers."

It is legitimate to ask, I think, exactly what is the relationship between any or all of these "readers" and the hundreds of thousands who have actually read the novel since its publication in 1868 and failed to discern what Dr. Miller describes. Notwithstanding her attempts at definition, the "real reader" seems at times to be none other than Dr. Miller herself. Yet if her model threatens to break down at this point, it is not I think a serious breakdown and the journey in her company is eminently worth while.

Integrated into her study are two valuable chapters on the "Inserted narrative", which give Dr. Miller the opportunity to emphasize that though the orchestration of voices serves on one level to entertain, on another it endows with metaphysical significance Dostoevsky's conviction that the essence of things is ultimately inexpressible. That this idea does not radically subvert the fiction is due in part to the complementary conviction that the reader may be induced to share the author's intuition and to accompany him on the voyage of discovery.

In Robert Louis Jackson's view this voyage of discovery, or more precisely the law of striving for the ideal, is what for Dostoevsky gave meaning to life. Jackson's place in Dostoevsky studies is already secure and *The Art of Dostoevsky* is the fruit of some thirty years of study and reflection on the Russian novelist.

His best-known book on Dostoevsky was published in 1966 under the title *Dostoevsky's Quest for Form*. This new book is not, as he puts it, "marked by any particular established approach or methodology" and owes much to the "metaphysical and ontologically oriented group of Russian critics" Vladimir Solov'yov, Vasily Rozanov, Vyacheslav Ivanov, Nicholas Berdyaev, Lev Shestov, Paul Evdokimoff and others. It also, understandably, owes much to Jackson's own previous work, particularly that on Dostoevsky's aesthetics. He holds that in his fiction Dostoevsky explores the interaction of three fundamental laws of nature. In addition to the egoistic and idealistic urges in man there is a third law – the law of striving for the ideal, which, writes Jackson, "the moving center of Dostoevsky's aesthetic and religious outlook; it is the structuring law of his artistic universe and of the people who inhabit it."

Jackson's reading of Dostoevsky is not therefore radically new. What is unusual about his approach is that he concentrates chiefly upon texts and topics which are rarely given much space in extended monographs on Dostoevsky. Particularly notable is

his thesis that *Notes from the House of the Dead*, often regarded as the least typical of Dostoevsky's works, introduces themes and experiences which are fundamental to the mature novels and serves as a tragic metaphor of the human condition in a meaningless world. Its links with *Notes from Underground* are well brought out. Four chapters take *Notes from the House of the Dead* as their starting-point, and although there are brief discussions of themes in *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov*, all the other chapters are devoted to shorter works: "The Peasant Marey", "The Gambler", "A Gentle Creature", "A Boy at Christ's Christmas Party", "The Dream of a Ridiculous Man" and "Bobok".

Jackson abandons the well-worn tourist routes through Dostoevsky's oeuvre and his leisurely and unpretentious exploration of lesser-known areas offers some unfamiliar and sometimes surprising viewpoints. This book will be particularly welcome to those who have long wanted to know how Jackson would link his analysis of Dostoevsky's aesthetics to a reading of his fiction.

Daughterly duties

W. Gareth Jones

ALEXANDRA TOLSTOY:

Out of the Past
430pp. Columbia University Press.
\$25.90.
0 231 05100 X

"Tolstoy (in the foreground) playing tennis. Opposite him, on the other side of the net, is Alexandra, in a white dress." So runs the caption to one of the family snapshots which introduce this volume of reminiscences by Alexandra, Tolstoy's youngest daughter and executrix of his will, who died in 1979 at the age of ninety-five.

Little is learnt about the great writer: our acquaintanceship with him hardly goes beyond the glimpse of the elderly, bearded father on his tennis-court. But Tolstoy's presence looms throughout the book's four sections. His heritage is borne uneasily by his daughter as a patriotic nurse on two Russian fronts from 1914 onwards. A determined but frustrated attempt is made after the Revolution to maintain a Tolstoyan nest at her father's estate of Yasnaya Polyana. The long years of self-exile after 1929, in Japan and America, are filled with lectures and writings about her father (her publications are listed in an appendix) and meetings with his admirers and devoted followers, Tolstoyans. "The purpose of my own life," gave Alexandra her living as well as her reason for living.

But however dutiful a daughter she proved to be, Alexandra's own formidable personality was, never eclipsed by her father's memory. She engages our attention with vivid, snapshot-like memories. The introductory photographs are a foretaste of this technique. So famine and hunger are not subject to retrospective analysis; but into sharp focus come momentary recollections – on a Moscow bridge people scoop up molasses from a spilt barrel; in Vladivostok a foreigner irreverently kicks a bag of beans destined for export; the thrill of throwing away food – rice, cheese, – from a Japanese ship. Our impression is of turning the pages of a family album; past events are not ordered, but memories are selected for their private significance. For the catalogues in which she participated there is a careless disdain, reflected perhaps in the inaccuracy of the two First World War military maps, one of which describes the Baltic as "Atlantic Ocean" and the other displaces Georgia into Armenia. That Tolstoyan disdain was possibly inherited from her father.

Yet the horrors of mechanized warfare, genocide in Turkey, gassing in Belorussia, were all experienced

by Tolstoy's daughter. After the Revolution came imprisonment, homelessness and hunger. The habits inculcated in Tolstoy's home, however, sustained her so that, when forced to physical labour in 1922, the thirty-eight-year-old ex-countess found that "loading the shelves on the carts was as easy as playing tennis".

At worst this inherited sense of status could be blinding snobbery. She recalled with Tolstoyan candour her attitude in 1916 to a fellow medical officer, Michael Frunze, who would later succeed Trotsky as War Commissar; with the unremembered face of an insignificant person he was "not accepted in the society", "not one of us". But her standing allowed her to speak her mind to Kallinin, an undoubted social inferior although Head of State, and meant that within months of political imprisonment she would be bicycling to the Kremlin with a protocol for Yasnaya Polyana. Stalin, too, who allocated funds to celebrate Tolstoy's jubilee in 1928, is intuitively placed as a "non-commissioned officer in the Tsar's guard" who knows how to behave to a lady. Here is another vivid snapshot. "He was too polite for a Bolshevik. As I was leaving, he rose again and escorted me to the door."

After the jubilee, Alexandra left for a lecture tour of Japan and exile. On her arrival she had a feeling which left a permanent imprint on her. In the bustle of the Japanese port, everyone belonged to recognized categories, except herself. She was now outside life. And so the theme of her Japanese period is a quest for a new station in life that explains her fascination for the ceremonial of Japanese culture. There are vignettes of tea-drinking ceremonies, traditional fishing with corn-morants, the shy face of a young descendant of the samurai, and there is the awareness of the awkwardness of her displaced "big European body".

She felt displaced again when, after two years, she moved to the America of the Depression, where she despaired at the widespread sympathy among intellectuals for the Revolution, and where the Roosevelts proved much less amenable to her standing than had Kallinin and Stalin. Eventually she did discover a new and enduring role by helping to establish in 1924 the Tolstoy Foundation, one of whose aims was to aid refugees to integrate in their new communities without sacrificing their cultural traditions. One of its beneficiaries must have been Alexandra Tolstoy, who now threw her energies into the unforeseen but huge task of resettling Russian refugees. When she died in the Tolstoy Foundation Nursing Home forty years later, in September 1979, she had seen to it that her father's will in some measure had been done.

Laughter through tears

Donald Fanger

RICHARD PEACE:

The Enigma of Gogol
An Examination of the Writings of N. V. Gogol and Their Place in the Russian Literary Tradition
344pp. Cambridge University Press.
£22.50.
0 521 23824 2

The enigma of Gogol, proclaimed and fostered by the writer himself, persists on at least three levels: the biographical, the textual, and the critical. About his temperament and life we have enough information to construct hypotheses, but not, in most cases, enough to confirm them. As for the fiction and plays that won Gogol early recognition as a writer of genius, readers continue to find themselves perplexed by the way his writing exerts that recognition while baffling all attempts to account for it in adequate or commensurate terms; an obscure sense of profundity haunts these plotless pages teeming with incomplete characters, trivial details, mysterious ironies: there seems to be more to them (as Slavsky remarks of the characters of *Dead Souls*) than what they are. It was natural that early critics should have met the problem by imputation; only in our own century has the serious nature of Gogol's art inspired efforts to discover the principles of coherence and meaning peculiar to it.

In his conclusion Mr. Peace takes these generalizations a step further, finding that "laughter for Gogol also has an intensely private function" and that "the 'medieval' features of Gogol's writing are in fact a vehicle of expression for his neurotic personality," for his "private obsessions or 'voices'." This theory of a "negative reconciliation with reality", wherein the writer makes his works a kind of exorcism of his own psyche, seems true enough, but only makes more insistent the question of how so intensely and idiosyncratically private a code can have held meaning for generations of readers. Peace's answer is that Gogol's self-therapeutic laughter was directed at sexual fears, concern about identity and status, and anxiety about art and writing – the fears and the concern, at least, presumably touching common human experience.

Because Gogol was in this paradoxical sense, his first Russian writer to "explore the neurotic personality",

recurs in the pages that follow.

The two concepts advanced in the introductory chapter are "medievalism", broadly construed, and "laughter through tears". Peace, following Dmitri Likhachev, argues that Gogol's literary sensibility is anachronistic, expressive of what he sees as Russia's "ritualistic", "non-humanist" and "non-compassionate" Christianity; Gogolian laughter seeks to chastise rather than to reconcile, to uphold "the values of society at the expense of the individual". (How this accords with Gogol's passionate romantic aestheticism, scarcely mentioned, is not clear.) As for the conventional, the formula comes from Pushkin and was taken up by Gogol himself – these are made to construct hypotheses for the ideology of Sentimentalism, a late eighteenth-century importation from the West which heralded a new orientation towards the inner world of the individual.

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On the Thirties trail

Patricia Craig

PETER DICKINSON:

The Last House Party
222pp. Bodley Head. £6.95.
0 370 30477 2

Peter Dickinson's characters are adept at playing games, possibly because they do little else. It isn't only the Snailwood men, in his latest novel, who "become partially stuck in their childhood". We remember the lady devoted to her rockery, the butterfly-collector and the train enthusiast of *A Summer in the Twenties*. The adults' playthings, to be sure, are objects of charm and intricacy, like the extraordinary clock with its full complement of carved figures, milkmaids, animals, seasons and so forth, that enchants the guests

at Snailwood Castle. The novels play games too; *The Last House Party* initiates a detecting game, with the reader set on to spot clues, make deductions, assess possibilities.

The characters are assembled from various literary sources. Zena, Countess of Snailwood, is one of those typical 1930s hostesses who become famous simply by indulging every trait to its fullest extent; she has also manufactured for herself a Balkan past, entirely fictitious, which suits the persona she chooses to assume. Vincent and Harry, two cousins, are Zena's nephews by marriage, are rather like a couple of Buchan heroes (on the surface, not too far from childhood and still involved in its engrossing rituals, united by bonds which include a common distaste for aunts (their own mothers not excepted), some of whom are

reputedly as formidable as any in P. G. Wodehouse. Lord Snailwood, the old buffer whose second wife Zena is, feels for his roses and his gadgets something of what Lord Emsworth felt for his pig. A recalcitrant handyman, a Beljamesque tennis girl, an Arab prince, all Eastern intensity and public school insouciance ("He is an enemy of my people, Masham. I say, this car makes a remarkable amount of smoke"), a Jewish professor and his cellist wife are also among the cast, and reinforce the impression of a piece of 1930s genre fiction - not about the period, but of the period.

It's an illusion, of course. Peter Dickinson shows a certain effort in presenting these preposterous types seriously, and a certain laxity in failing to get to grips with the political issues he raises (Snailwood's last house-party, which takes place in the summer of 1937, is arranged by Zena, who goes in for political games, "to settle the Palestine question"); but his new novel is nevertheless both complex and entertaining. In it, the thriller-writer's method is allied with the social historian's and the ironist's concerns. The novel is very carefully constructed, with events of the past and the present set out in alternate chapters. As in conventional detective fiction, there is a violent deed at the centre - not the standard bloodless murder of the usual fictional house-party, but a truly distressing act: a sexual assault on a child. There are several candidates for the part of the culprit here, and one of them, as a consequence, undergoes vicissitudes as improbable as anything concocted by Edgar Wallace.

There is plenty to divert the reader - jokes, red herrings, amorous interludes, elaborate set-pieces. The novel plays so adroitly with the idea of artifice that it is difficult, in the end, to decide whether to read it as a fairly straightforward high-class thriller, or as the last of the country-house spoofs.

The book begins and ends with an apparently unplanned suicide. The author's challenging aim seems to be to show that there is, in fact, no such thing as "mindless violence", whether directed towards the self or towards others. Each aggressive act is the result of a long cycle of action and reaction, continued through generations. The danger of such a deterministic view is that within the fiction it weakens dramatic tension, while outside the world of the novel it implies an alarming belief in subconscious collusion - is a brutal, unprovoked assault upon Rendé's exonerated because she is a self-confessed masochist who habitually lets herself be abused?

Crime Wave is an ambitious first novel, an attempt to analyse the drive to self-destruction that is weakened by a crude underpinning of Freudian, Jungian and environmentalist theories and some patchy writing.

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These stories of false starts and false behaviour are narrated in a flexible and resourceful German. Wohmann's transcription of contemporary speech is admirable; but she also introduces coinages, unexpected colloquialisms and satirical observations that startle and amuse. In brief, she displays her authorial capacity to instil interest and humour into a decidedly unpromising material.

Midwestern Africa

Stephen Brook

JOHN STOCKWELL:

Red Sunset
360pp. Gollancz. £8.50.
0 573 03126 3

In recent years major novelists such as Updike and Naipaul have painstakingly created African countries in which to set their fiction. The action of John Stockwell's *Red Sunset* takes place in Burundi, a beautiful but impoverished real country in the heart of Africa. As a former CIA agent who controlled the Angola task force, he ought to know what he's writing about, yet the elaborate fictional republics of Naipaul and Updike have a greater ring of truth than the bluntly naturalistic Burundi portrayed here.

There is landscape in Stockwell's country, and there is a cast of diplomats, a police chief, bandits, beautiful women, and loyal servants, but they are all props. The American oil executives and the Russian diplomats express their opposed, though occasionally overlapping, ideologies, and there are brief ruminations about Africa before and after independence, but this novel isn't an exotic political thriller or a Graham Greene-style entertainment. In spite of its setting, it's pure Midwestern corn.

Natalie, a beautiful American unhappily married to a drunken executive, falls in love with a Russian diplomat. Sad to say it is clear that their love is doomed from the start. Her passion changes her - literally, it seems: she "felt a warm thrill of excitement run through her body, flushing her cheeks and deepening the brown of her eyes". Their love blossoms as Alexis coaches Natalie in preparation for the ordeal by chess which forms the climax of the book. For on her first social appearance in Burundi, Natalie is insulted, in a thoroughly im-

probable scene, by a South African ex-Nazi banker. His gross attempts to humiliate her in public prompt no intervention by the assorted diplomats and businessmen who are present, so she asserts herself by challenging him to a public game of chess a month later.

A chess game, however, is a poor device for a climax. Either the author has to waste time explaining the rules and the implications of the moves, or he has to assume that the reader is familiar with the game. Stockwell tries to have it both ways, and the scene falls even flatter than the rest of the book. While the game is in progress, another American couple with a teetering marriage are fending off a murderous attempt to kidnap their daughter. Again improbably, the attempt fails.

Stockwell seems to feel more comfortable writing about restless middle-class Americans than depicting war Africans. Apart from the good-natured servants, most of the Africans in *Red Sunset* are corrupt or vicious. The villainous Sergeant Ngandu goes in for apostrophes of this kind: "Ndi mukumona - I see you," he saluted the great lake, his voice heavy with scorn. "Mai a menyambushi - waters of goat piss." Bodies glisten with sweat, and pain is unflinchingly conveyed: "His body had begun to quiver as adrenalin surged through his arteries, but anyone could see he wasn't afraid."

What is troubling is not that the writing is bad (although it is) but rather that it is lifeless. This is an adventure novel without much adventure, building to a climax without tension, injected with political reflections of utter predictability. The romances and the violence are weary routine; the setting is picture postcard. There is a blenders that makes one long for even a dash of vulgarity that would lend the book some panache or vigour.

In the labyrinth of guilt

Michael Butler

MAX FRISCH:

Blaubart
172pp. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp. DM24.

Outwardly Max Frisch's new story suggests the dimensions of the conventional detective novel: Felix Schaad, a fifty-four-year-old doctor, has been falsely accused of the brutal murder of a call-girl, Rosalinde Zogg, his former (and sixth) wife. There, however, the similarity ends; for, far from logically analyzing the stages which led to the crime and pursuing the identity of the true murderer, Frisch begins his tale with Schaad's acquittal for "want of evidence" and concentrates entirely on how he attempts to come to terms with this devastating judgment.

Although technically innocent, Schaad cannot in fact free himself of a debilitating sense of guilt which clearly originates not in a single error, but in a lifetime of defective personal relationships - not least with his numerous wives, the seventh of whom he is in the process of losing, like the rest, in divorce. Thus the "trial" of this ironic latterday Bluebeard continues in his head as he recalls fragments of the cross-examination of disparate witnesses, adding to them dream-like confrontations with his dead parents and a final, spare but trenchant self-interrogation in which the nature of guilt and personal inadequacy is fitfully illuminated.

Felix Schaad, whose very name suggests ironic contradiction, finds himself suspended like many previous Frisch protagonists in a capsule of timelessness from which no amount of distraction - solitary games of billiards, drinking buddies, walking, a trip to Japan - can liberate him. Deprived of his familiar

bourgeois routine - his patients have deserted him and he is forced to sell his practice - he can live only in the remembered words and gestures of his ex-wives, friends and acquaintances. What these "witnesses" reveal, however, is merely their own egocentricity, and a stubborn refusal to give up "their" image of Schaad. As in his previous story *Der Mensch erscheint im Holozän* (1979), which *Blaubart* stylistically resembles, Frisch presents memory both as the key to individual perception, and as the single most important source of distortion.

Blaubart is a further subtle variation on the author's life-long obsession with the problem of identity and the fatal propensity of human beings

to thrust crippling definitions on each other. Frisch sketches with impressive economy the increasing isolation of a man forced to recognize with a mixture of horror and detachment the labyrinthine nature of guilt. A final abortive suicide attempt leaves Schaad anesthetized in a limbo of emotional impoverishment.

Despite the pared-down language - the tale is stripped to its essentials - a very humour informs *Blaubart* and effectively counterbalances the pessimism of its theme. And although Max Frisch can no longer avoid producing texts which are resonant of earlier achievements, this latest work demonstrates once again his skill in creating new and fascinating ways of exploring old truths.

Raging anarchy

T. J. Binyon

KEN FOLLETT:

The Man from St. Petersburg
292pp. Hamish Hamilton. £7.95.
0 241 10783 0

It is the summer of 1914. In response to Germany's war preparations England is desperately attempting to negotiate a treaty with Russia. An imperial emissary, Prince Aleksei Orlov, comes to London, closely followed by Felix Kschessinsky, a rabid anarchist, determined to assassinate Orlov and put an end to the talks. By one of those coincidences which make fiction almost as strange as truth the English representative at the negotiations, the Earl of Walden, is married to a Russian who is Orlov's aunt and was Kschessinsky's mistress.

In his earlier, immensely successful thriller *Iceberg*, Ken Follett has written

chiefly about Nazi spies in the Second World War. Though here he moves back a war, there is a family resemblance between this book and the previous ones. As before the central figure is a fiercely independent loner, sexually irresistible, who bends women to his will and uses them to further his plans. And, as before, the sympathies of the author are split, going as much to the spy or the policeman. But there is a difference: *The Man from St. Petersburg* is much more of a historical novel. Action throughout takes second place to emotional and sexual entanglements, to complicated relations between husband and wife, lover and mistress, father and daughter.

And, although the end result is still exciting and very readable, it is a slight disappointment that the author should have chosen to abandon a genre he had made his own for one in which many others have trodden before him.

The virgin visitor

By Michael Hofmann

JOEL AGE:

Twelve Years: An American Boyhood in East Germany
344pp. Faber. £8.25.
0 374 27958 6

Joel Age, the son of the celebrated American writer, spent the years from eight to twenty - from just after the establishment of the German Democratic Republic to just before the building of the Berlin Wall - in East Germany with his mother, Alma, and her second husband, the German Communist writer, Bodo Uhse. These personal circumstances (and the author's pedigree) awaken expectations of a memorable fusion of autobiography and social history. Such a book might be analogous in importance and scope to the testimony of the sole, highly qualified survivor of some disaster.

The fact that these expectations are disappointed is intimately related to the nature of book and author. From his vantage-point as a "successful failure", as he is described by Dwight Macdonald, Joel Agee shows a particular sympathy with adolescence. And it is the traits typical of adolescence - rebelliousness, alienation, self-centredness, delusion, introversion - which tend to relegate the social setting to a grey unimportance. The focus of *Twelve Years* is so intensely autobiographical that the background is blurred, even eclipsed. The book's sub-title, "An American Boyhood in East Germany", is unfortunately exact: "The East German boyhood of an American" would have been considerably more interesting, as would the account if Agee had not "played hooky" quite a bit, if he had entertained ambitions within the framework of the system, and if he had been more fully assimilated into the creeds and institutions of the GDR. His perception of East German society is limited by the small extent of his participation in it.

It is greatly to Agee's credit, however, that he never at any stage resorts to faking a social or historical involvement. His book is quite unrelentingly honest in that its best parts are precisely those in which Agee's personal experience comes into contact with the momentous historical events of the time: the death of Stalin, and the awkward gyrations of public figures during his posthumous disgrace; the crisis in Egypt, and the sudden developments in Hungary in 1956 (Agee quotes from a diary he kept at the time, "Yesterday Fascist terror was still raging in Hungary. Twenty-one men who were keeping watch before the CP building in Budapest were hanged from lamp posts. Communists are being beaten to death, or drenched with gasoline and set on fire. It could happen here!"). The reaction to the prospect of the CDU candidate, Adenauer, being elected as Chancellor in West Germany.

There are some illuminating pages on the advent of rock'n'roll: the purely phonetic enthusiasm of Joel's friends for the lyrics of Chuck Berry; the occasion when one of them goes to a Bill Haley concert in West Berlin and witnesses astonishing scenes - "screams flying through the air, floorboards ripped up, the police called in. It is the treatment of subjects like these that gives the reader an impression of time and place that is otherwise lacking. There could have been many more of these.

Apart from these, the sense of historical reality is only to be found in occasional incidents and phrases that strike one as being in some way emblematic. As Agee's approach is unanalytical and non-discursive, these insights are buried in his text - nuggets of an oblique, poetic, accidental truth that the reader must discover for himself. Thus, the least one can say is that the book contains a kind of allegorical monster: "The behemoth of the frozen lake to the West, across the frozen lake to the West, describes how he came a magpie, who was later shot upon and killed by his wild fellows, one thinks almost involuntarily of the author, an ex-

it, that is evidence of his "modern sensibility", we must reply that Swinburne's acceptance of his idiosyncrasy was no franker than that of his friends who were similarly constituted, while his public expression of it was very guarded. . . . The fact that there is, indubitably, in and behind Swinburne's work a great deal of peculiar sexual psychology of a kind which can be exposed and explored far more freely now than it could be in the middle of the last century, does not make Swinburne modern in any significant sense of the word. Nor, to be absolutely fair, does Dr Laforeade make his claim thus baldly. He says:

His political ideas are out of date; but his sensibility is modern. And by the way in which he embodied his sensibility in perfect works of art, he is the superior of most moderns. . . . The time will come when this much will be recognized as the truth concerning the author of "Lesbia Brandon" "A Year's Letters", "Poems and Ballads" and "Solomon's Vision of Love". And he will then be the turn of some of his most recent critics to look old-fashioned.

But the choices of these particular works makes the contention clear: (it involves, we may remark, giving the title of a perfect work of art to "Lesbia Brandon") Swinburne, by the fidelity of his expression of the abnormality of his erotic psychology, belongs to the future, not to the past; he is not merely modern, but in advance of modernity. If this be true, we can only reply quite simply that the full development of modernity is a disease from which we must hope that civilization will somehow escape.

It must be quite unconsciously, and owing to his remarkable veracity as a biographer, that Dr Laforeade's actual biography is unaffected

patriate American. Similarly, there are many instances of Agee and his friends misbehaving at school which lead one to speculate on the extremely ambivalent response towards up by the generation that came after him. These questions are never asked, let alone answered, by Agee, and his imagistic skill as an author, that they arise out of his narrative.

In the absence of any extended annotation of East German life, what we are given is a frank, scrupulous and detailed book about growing up before the CP building in Budapest were hanged from lamp posts. Communists are being beaten to death, or drenched with gasoline and set on fire. It could happen here!"). The reaction to the prospect of the CDU candidate, Adenauer, being elected as Chancellor in West Germany.

Reading about Agee's youth is like reading about one's own - the details are different, there is less self-censorship and the narrative is very skilful, but it all strikes one as profound and familiar. It is curious that such a particular book should appear so unusual, in effect, a Continental mode - reminding one of any number of American teenage fictions. One shares Agee's chagrin at leaving East Germany still a virgin, but one might say that this was only symbolic of his whole time there. Certainly, when, on the last page, a well-meaning friend says to him, "And with your experience of life in a socialist country, you'll be in a position to become a very fine Marxist indeed", the irony should be seen to hurt not only East Germany but also the youthful Joel Agee.

So far indeed from being warped by it, the biography is the most, refutation of it. For not only does it give the familiar story of Swinburne's rescue by Theodore Watts without bias but it justly insists on the value of the supreme service done. Dr Laforeade allows no reader to doubt for a moment that Swinburne was saved by Watts-Dunton, or that he needed to be saved. In his capacity as veracious biographer, in this and a hundred other ways, Dr Laforeade confirms the total impression of Swinburne as an altogether astonishing example of arrested development, astonishing in the positive, not the negative sense.

And it is quite impossible not to sense an intimate relation between Swinburne's sexual idiosyncrasies, which are prolonged from boyhood, and his failure to become intellectually adult. To say simply that "his political ideas are out of date; but his sensibility is modern" is a strange understatement. His political ideas were childish. He never had any political ideas of his own; and those which he borrowed from time to time were always incoherent.

Not so Swinburne. One can imagine a Swinburne in any century, living essentially the same life, and ending in no way very different. There is a beautiful and quite disarming naivety about him. He is, on a magnificent, almost sublime scale, the infant prodigy; and if, as seems very probable, the piece of criticism Dr Laforeade has unearthed from Mallarmé's review is the criticism of Swinburne by himself, he recognized his own peculiarity as clearly as anyone. "Baudelaire was Catulle, Swinburne was pagan. . . . But, 'Swinburne is pagan, not like a Greek of the age of Aeschylus, but pagan only as an Englishman of the nineteenth century can be.' That adult impossibility was Swinburne."

Hankering for Hungary

By George Mikes

MONICA PORTER:

The Paper Bridge: A Return to Budapest
232pp. Quartet. £8.95.
0 7043 2296 X

Monica Porter was four years old when her parents - Peter Halász, a well-known journalist, and Vili Rácz, an even more famous actress and singer, also known as the "Hungarian Marlene Dietrich" - escaped from Hungary after the Revolution of 1956. Her parents moved around quite a bit and she lived in England, the United States, France and West Germany. In the two English-speaking countries she was desperately anxious to become assimilated, to "be like everybody else" and, although occasionally she was regarded as romantic or even exotic. She became a journalist in London, married and had a son in 1978. After Adam's birth, the gynaecologist asked her if she was Hungarian. She pleaded guilty but enquired how the doctor had guessed. Oh, that was quite simple. The baby had a very dark complexion and - much more important - had a Mongolian Blue Spot on his bottom which appears exclusively on certain male babies born in Hungary. These babies - the gynaecologist added - could be traced back to Genghis Khan.

I personally thought that the dark complexion could be traced back to Monica Porter's father, whom I know well, and that Genghis Khan could safely be left out of it; on the other hand I know nothing about any blue spots on his behind so perhaps some family ties do exist between the Halászes and the Genghis. The Khan did pay a brief visit to Hungary in the thirteenth century.

When the author heard the doctor's strange tale confirmed by other sources, she decided to find out more about her Hungaro-Tartar

origins, and flew to Budapest taking her three-year-old son with her.

First she tried to find out something about the identity of Hungary. Is it a little country in the Carpathian Basin, she asks, or is it part of a bigger continent called emigration, a portable country one can find dispersed in five continents? In Hungary, of course, the place looks more real than from abroad. There, Hungarians are in a majority, not just a few odd specimens with strange accents, striving to achieve something, first of all to cease to be Hungarians (by the way, I am mentioning in the book as a "professional Hungarian"). Monica Porter describes her visit in great detail. She met many relations and friends, old and young, middle-class people and peasants, the contented and the restless, the athletic and the sick. She had to go to a Communist country to find domestic servants living in, and also a true, old-fashioned snobbish respect for the aristocracy. A taxi-driver told her about a brief journey that he would leave the country as soon as possible because Hungary was too small for him. She went to the theatre, to ballet and the political cabaret (travelled around a bit, visited Lake Balaton, the town of Debrecen and the tiny village of Gölle a lady described Hungary as a nation leaning with one hand on Russia and stretching out the other palm to the West. Perhaps, but perhaps it is Russia which is leaning on Hungary with its full weight.

Be that as it may, what does the author's four week visit amount to? What conclusions did she reach about her origins and about the paper bridge that links her to the country of her birth? She believes that once a refugee always a refugee; it is useless to search for roots. These roots grow inward and you have to accept them as part of yourself. Perhaps after a few more years she will go one step further and believe what many older *émigrés* and expatriates have been driven to believe, namely that the unit of humanity is man, that you are what you are, and that that is your true identity.

Information, please

Henry C[hristopher] Bailey (1878-1961), writer of detective and historical fiction: anecdotes or other information on his detective-fiction writing.

N. E. Talburt.
Box 1376, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701.

James Fenimore Cooper: facsimiles of literary manuscripts, letters and other materials by or pertaining to him: for a critical biography and a critical edition of his writings.

James Franklin Beard,
Department of English, Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts 01610.

Arthur Didsay (1856-1922), founder of the Japan Society: letters, papers; contact with descendants or descendants of friends sought: for a biography.

John Adlard,
146 Holland Road, London W14.

Genovefa of Brabant, popular legend: any references in art, literature and science, especially in folk-tales (*Volkstümliche, libretto popolare*, chapbooks) and in popular prints (*Bilderbogen, imagerie populaire*).

Konrad Vanja,
Im Winkel 6, D-1000 Berlin-West 33.

Finisby Archer's Ticket for the Shooting of 1676, half of which is illustrated in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, January-June 1832, p.113: information as to the present whereabouts of the whole ticket, or an illustration of it.

A. A. Holt,
13 Warren Court, High Cross Road, London N17.

Major-General Claude Martin (1755-1800), founder of the Martinière schools in Lyons, Lucknow and Calcutta: any information not contained in the life by Samuel

C. Hill; for a biographical study. Kenneth Savidge,
27 Wellington Park, Belfast 9.

Margaret Cole: documents, photographs, anecdotes or recollections sought; for an authorized biography.

Betty D. Vernon,
43 The Crescent, Belmont, Sutton, Surrey SM2 6BP.

Douglas Jerrold (1803-1857), author: copies of letters written 1852-57 to Jerrold by Thomas Wakley; will exchange for run of letters from Jerrold to Wakley for the same period; for a biography of Thomas Wakley.

Mary Bostetter,
18 Downing Court, Grenville Street, London WC1.

Lieutenant-General Sir Oliver Leese: correspondence etc sought, in particular copies of any letters submitted for publication; for an authorized biography.

Rowland Ryder,
14 North Drive, Edgbaston, Birmingham 5.

Thomas Babington Macaulay: citations of biographical and critical writings, whereabouts of letters, reminiscences, illustrations, published and unpublished manuscripts; for a bibliography of writings about Macaulay.

Randolph Bufano,
746 17th Avenue, Menlo Park, California 94025.

Studenki Notes from courses in rhetoric, logic, English language and literature, moral philosophy, and natural philosophy from the sixteenth and nineteenth century Scottish and English universities; for a study.

Winifred Bryan Hooper,
Department of English, College of Arts and Science, University of Missouri-Columbia, Columbia, Missouri 65211.